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HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

THIRD SERIES:

COMMENCING WITH THE ACCESSION OF

WILLIAM IV.

43° VICTORIÆ, 1880.

VOL. CCL.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM

THE FIFTH DAY OF FEBRUARY 1880,

TO

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY OF FEBRUARY 1880.

First Volume of the First Session.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY CORNELIUS BUCK,
AT THE OFFICE FOR "HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,"
22, PATERNOSTER ROW. [E.C.]

1880.

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VOLUME CCL.

THIRD SERIES.

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"That when the attention of Your Majesty's advisers was called during last Parliament to the approaching distress in Ireland, they only replied with insulting mockery, and that when the distress deepened, and the inhabitants of the afflicted districts sought to move public opinion by peaceable meetings, the Government adopted an attitude of provocation, and answered the Petitions of the starving cultivators by arbitrary arrests and displays of military force:

"That the Ministry seek to stir up evil passions and prejudices between the English and Irish peoples:

"That they sedulously describe as seditious and disloyal the Constitutional endeavours of the Irish representatives to establish improved relations between Ireland and the other portions of Your Majesty's Dominions and to bring about a better distribution of the legislative work which now overburthens the Imperial Parliament:

"That when any English Party or English politicians seek to promote the removal of Irish grievances, they are denounced by the present Ministry to the prejudices of the unthinking and unreflecting as the bad patriots and enemies of England, and that there can no longer be a doubt that this policy has been adopted for the purpose of obtaining a factious and calamitous success at the approaching General Elections:

"And that, therefore, in face of such misconduct, we have no alternative but to beseech Your Majesty to dismiss from Your Councils Your present advisers, in order to prevent the further practice of abuses more dangerous than open treason to the State,"—(*Mr. O'Donnell.*)

After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 12, Noes 128; Majority 116.—(Div. List, No. 4.)

Address *agreed to*:—To be presented by Privy Councillors.

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SUPPLY—*Resolved*, That this House will, To-morrow, resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

WAYS AND MEANS—*Resolved*, That this House will, To-morrow, resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill [Bill 1]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) 533

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "it is inexpedient that any portion of the property accruing to the Commissioners of Church Temporalities under 'The Irish Church Act, 1869,' shall be applied towards the temporary relief of distress in Ireland, and that the provisions of the Bill authorising such advances out of such property cannot be satisfactory; and this House is of opinion that all advances to be made for the purpose of relieving distress in Ireland shall be made from Imperial resources,"—(*Mr. Synan,*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After debate, Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Main Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

Bankruptcy Law Amendment Bill [Bill 37]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Attorney General*) 560

After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* to a Select Committee.

And, on February 23, Committee *nominated*:—List of the Committee .. 567

Chartered Banks (Colonial) Bill [Bill 4]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson*) 567

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Mr. Ramsay.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Main Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* to a Select Committee.

And, on February 20, Committee *nominated*:—List of the Committee .. 577

Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Inprovement (Scotland) Act (1875) Amendment Bill [Bill 5]—

Order for Committee read 578

After short debate, Bill *considered* in Committee:—Bill *reported*, without Amendment; to be read the third time *To-morrow.*

ANCIENT MONUMENTS [EXPENSES]—

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of all Expenses which may become payable by the Commissioners, under the provisions of any Act of the present Session, to provide for the better protection of Ancient Monuments.

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

Medical Appointments Qualifications Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Errington, Mr. Blennerhassett*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 71] 579

Epping Forest Act (1878) (Continuance) Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. Gerard Noel*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 73] 579

Indian Salaries and Allowances Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Edward Stanhope, Lord George Hamilton*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 72] 579

LORDS, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13.

AFGHAN WAR—ALLEGED SEVERITIES AT CABUL—EXPLANATION OF GENERAL ROBERTS—Observations, Viscount Cranbrook 579

PERSIA AND HERAT—Observations, Question, Earl Granville; Reply, The Earl of Beaconsfield 582

COAL MINES — THE LEYCETT COLLIERY EXPLOSION — MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS—

Moved, That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for Report of the inquiry into the Leycett Colliery explosion,—(*The Earl De La Warr*) 583

After short debate, on Question? *Resolved* in the *Negative*.

OFFICE OF REGISTRAR GENERAL—DR. FARR—Observations, Question, The Marquess of Lothian; Reply, The Earl of Beaconsfield .. 585

COMMONS, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13.

QUESTIONS.

CYPRUS—THE ORDINANCE SUPERSEDING THE EXTRA-TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION OF FOREIGN CONSULS—Question, Sir Charles W. Dilke; Answer, Mr. Bourke 588

RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND)—Question, Mr. Dillwyn; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 589

EAST COAST OF AFRICA—ZANZIBAR—SLAVERY—Question, Mr. Anderson; Answer, Mr. W. H. Smith 589

NAVAL DISCIPLINE BILL—Question, Mr. Macdonald; Answer, Mr. W. H. Smith 590

ARMY—SOUTH AFRICA—NATAL AND THE TRANSVAAL—ALLEGED MISCONDUCT OF BRITISH TROOPS—Questions, Mr. A. Mills, Mr. J. Holms; Answers, Colonel Stanley 590

RIVERS CONSERVANCY BILL—LEGISLATION—Question, Mr. Arthur Peel; Answer, Mr. Sclater-Booth 591

RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND)—Question, The O'Donoghue; Answer, Mr. J. Lowther 591

PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—SUPPLY—Question, Mr. Dillwyn; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 592

AFGHAN WAR—ALLEGED SEVERITIES AT CABUL—EXPLANATION OF GENERAL ROBERTS—Observations, Mr. E. Stanhope; Question, Sir Charles W. Dilke; Answer, Mr. E. Stanhope 592

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—Order for Committee read; Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—

INDIA—POPULAR REPRESENTATION—Observations, Sir David Wedderburn; Reply, Mr. E. Stanhope; Observations, Sir George Campbell .. 593

COMMERCE AND FREE TRADE—MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE—

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "a Select Committee be appointed to consider the Commercial Relations at present existing between England and Foreign Nations, especially with regard to the import of Manufactured Goods from Abroad, as well as the effect caused by our system of one-sided so-called Free Trade, with a view (if possible) of permanently ameliorating the position of the wage classes of this Country,"—(*Mr. Wheelhouse,*) —instead thereof 604

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, *Moved,* "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Newdegate*):—After further short debate, Question put, and *negatived.*

After further debate, Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—The House *divided;* Ayes 75, Noes 6; Majority 69.—(Div. List, No. 5.)

Main Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—

TREATY GUARANTEES—Observations, Question, Sir William Harcourt; Answers, The Attorney General, The Chancellor of the Exchequer .. 638

Motion, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," by leave, *withdrawn*:—Committee *deferred* till *Monday* next.

Seed Potatoes (Ireland) (*re-committed*) **Bill** [Bill 68]—

Order for Committee read 651

Instruction to the Committee, That they have power to extend the provisions of the Bill to kinds of seed other than Potato seed.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

After some time spent therein, Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Monday* next.

SEED (IRELAND) [ADVANCES]—

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of any sums of money which may become payable under the provisions of any Act of the present Session to enable Guardians of the Poor to borrow money for the purpose of procuring Seed for Tenants in Ireland.

Resolution to be reported upon *Monday* next.

Alkali Acts Amendment, &c. Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Sclater-Booth, Mr. Secretary Cross, Viscount Sandon, Mr. Salt*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 74] .. 668

Poor Law Guardians (Ireland) (Ministers of Religion) Bill—*Ordered* (*Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, Mr. Shaw, Mr. Denis O'Conor*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 75] 669

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ARMY—THE AUXILIARY FORCES—THE VOLUNTEER REVIEW — Question, Observations, Lord Campbell; Reply Viscount Bury 672

OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENTS AND OFFICE OF THE GENTLEMAN USHER OF THE BLACK ROD—
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PRIVATE BILLS—
Standing Orders Committee appointed:—List of the Committee .. 676

COMMONS, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16.

INDISPOSITION OF MR. SPEAKER—

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, on account of indisposition:—Whereupon Mr. Raikes, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker, and after Prayers counted the House, and, Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order.

QUESTIONS.

CIVIL SERVICE WRITERS—Question, Sir Joseph M'Kenna; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 677
CYPRUS—THE ORDINANCES—Question, Sir Charles W. Dilke; Answer, Mr. Bourke 677
ARMY—LONGFORD BARRACKS—Question, Mr. Errington; Answer, Colonel Stanley 677
INDIA—EMIGRATION OF COOLIES TO LA REUNION—Question, Mr. Errington; Answer, Mr. E. Stanhope 678
ARMY—THE ROYAL WARRANT, JULY, 1879—RESERVE OFFICERS—Question, Colonel Alexander; Answer, Colonel Stanley 678
MASTERS IN LUNACY—APPOINTMENT OF MR. HENRY GRAHAM — Question, Mr. Anderson; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer .. 679
TURKEY—HAFIZ PASHA—Questions, Mr. Dillwyn, Mr. Rylands; Answers, Mr. Bourke 680
AFRICA (WEST COAST)—BOMBARDMENT OF ONITSHA—Question, Mr. Richard; Answer, Mr. Bourke 681
INDIA—THE NAGA HILL TRIBES—Question, Mr. Dalrymple; Answer, Mr. E. Stanhope 681
ARMY — COMMISSARIAT AND TRANSPORT DEPARTMENTS — THE WARRANT—Question, Mr. O'Conor; Answer, Colonel Stanley 681
POST OFFICE — INVESTMENTS — SAVINGS BANKS—Question, Mr. Fawcett; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 682
IRELAND—"HOME RULERS" MEMBERS OF THIS HOUSE — Question, Mr. Sullivan; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 682
POST OFFICE—THE NEW PENNY POSTAGE STAMP—Questions, Mr. Thomson Hankey; Answers, Lord John Manners 682
AFGHANISTAN—PROCLAMATIONS OF GENERAL ROBERTS—Questions, Sir Charles W. Dilke; Answers, Mr. E. Stanhope 683
CRIMINAL LAW (CHANNEL ISLANDS) — CASE OF JAMES THOMAS—Question, Mr. Pease; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross 684

CUSTOMS CIVIL SERVICE WRITERS—Question, Mr. Finigan; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 684
GRAND JURIES AND PRESENTMENT SESSIONS (IRELAND) — Question, Sir Thomas M'Clure; Answer, Mr. J. Lowther 685
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HOME RULE—Personal Explanation, Viscount Castlereagh; Observations, The Marquess of Hartington 686

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill [Bill 1]—

Order for Committee read:—*Moved*, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair,"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) 688

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "it is inexpedient that any portion of the property accruing to the Commissioners of Church Temporalities under 'The Irish Church Act, 1869,' shall be applied towards the temporary relief of distress in Ireland, and that the provisions of the Bill authorizing such advances out of such property cannot be satisfactory; and this House is of opinion that all advances to be made for the purpose of relieving the distress in Ireland should be made from Imperial resources,"—(*Mr. Synan,*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After long debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 126, Noes 34; Majority 92.—(Div. List, No. 6.)
Main Question, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair," put, and *agreed to*:—Bill *considered* in Committee 726
After long time spent therein, Committee report Progress; to sit again *To-morrow.*

Seed Potatoes (Ireland) (*re-committed*) **Bill** [Bill 58]—
Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress* 13*th February*] 772
Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered *To-morrow.*

Ancient Monuments Bill [Bill 51]—
Bill *considered* in Committee 773
After short time spent therein, [House counted out.]

LORDS, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17.

PARLIAMENTARY REPORTING — THE HOUSE OF LORDS — Question, Lord Sudeley; Answer, The Earl of Beaconsfield 777
THE TRIPARTITE TREATY OF 1856—Observations, Question, Earl Granville; Reply, The Earl of Beaconsfield:—Short debate thereon .. 777

PRIVATE BILLS—
All petitions relating to Standing Orders which shall be presented during the present Session *referred* to the Standing Orders Committee, unless otherwise ordered.

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PRIVATE BUSINESS.

Gaslight and Coke, Commercial Gas, and South Metropolitan Gaslight and Coke Companies Bill (*by Order*)—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Alderman Cotton*) 784

Gaslight and Coke, Commercial Gas, and South Metropolitan Gaslight and Coke Companies Bill (*by Order*)—continued.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Colonel Makins.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Main Question put, and *agreed to:*—Bill read a second time, and *committed.*

QUESTIONS.

The Indian Press — Newspaper Correspondents in the Field — Question, Sir Charles W. Dilke; Answer, Mr. E. Stanhope .. 791

Museum of Natural History, South Kensington—Question, Mr. J. Holms; Answer, Mr. Gerard Noel 791

Slave Trade (Consolidation) Act—Disposal of Slaves—Question, Mr. Anderson; Answer, Mr. W. H. Smith 791

Parliament — Qualification of Voters, Midlothian—Questions, Mr. Hardcastle; Answers, The Lord Advocate 792

Regulation of Railways Acts — The Railway Commissioners — Question, Mr. Monk; Answer, Mr. J. G. Talbot 794

Roumania — The Jews — Question, Mr. Serjeant Simon; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 794

Egypt — Finance—International Commission of Liquidation—Question, Sir Charles W. Dilke; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer .. 795

Morocco—Outbreak at Fez—Question, Mr. Serjeant Simon; Answer, Mr. Bourke 796

Parliament — Privilege — Mr. Plimsoll—Question, Observations, Sir Charles Russell; Reply, Mr. Plimsoll 797

Moved, "That the publication of printed placards throughout the City of Westminster, representing the part taken by Sir Charles Russell, the Member for the said City, in the proceedings of this House as 'inhuman' and 'degrading,' injuriously reflects upon the said Member, is an attempt to coerce and intimidate him in the discharge of his duties, and a breach of the Privileges of this House,"—(*Sir Charles Russell.*)

After short debate, *Moved,* "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*The Marquess of Hartington:*)—After further short debate, Question put, and *agreed to:*—Debate *adjourned* till *Friday.*

Supreme Court of Judicature Acts—The Assizes—Question, Sir Henry James; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross 809

Poor Law (Scotland)—Legislation—Question, Sir Alexander Gordon; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross 810

Army—Leeds Cavalry Barracks—Question, Mr. Wheelhouse; Answer, Colonel Stanley 810

Post Office Savings Banks—Question, Mr. Wait; Answer, Lord John Manners 811

MOTIONS.

Borough Franchise (Ireland)—Resolution—

Moved, "That the restricted nature of the Borough Franchise in Ireland as compared with that existing in England and in Scotland is a subject deserving the immediate attention of Parliament, with a view of establishing a fair and just equality of the franchise in the three countries,"—(*Mr. Meldon*) 811

BOROUGH FRANCHISE (IRELAND)—RESOLUTION—*continued.*

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "it is inexpedient to deal with the question of lowering the franchise in Ireland,"—(*Mr. Charles Lewis,*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After long debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 188, Noes 242; Majority 54.—(Div. List, No. 10.)

Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to.*

Licensing Laws Amendment Bill—

Considered in Committee 877

Moved, "That the Chairman be directed to move the House, that leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Licensing Laws,"—(*Mr. Staveley Hill.*)

After short debate, Question put:—The Committee *divided;* Ayes 208, Noes 7; Majority 201.—(Div. List, No. 11.)

Resolution *reported:*—Bill *ordered* (*Mr. Staveley Hill, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Isaac*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 76.]

ORDER OF THE DAY.

Seed Potatoes (Ireland) Bill [Bills 48, 68]—

Bill, as amended, *considered* 878

After short debate, Bill read the third time; Title amended:—Bill *passed,* with an amended Title.

MOTIONS.

Metropolis Improvement Schemes Modification Provisional Orders Bill— *Ordered* (*Sir Matthew Ridley, Mr. Secretary Cross*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 77] 884

Charities (Ireland) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Meldon, Mr. Errington*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 78] 884

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (No. 2) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Pease, Viscount Castlereagh, Mr. Tremayne*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 79] .. 885

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS—

Select Committee *re-appointed,* "to inquire into the Contagious Diseases Acts, 1866—1869, their Administration, Operation, and Effect:"—List of the Committee .. 885

Common Law Procedure and Judicature Acts Amendment Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Gregory, Mr. Waddy, Mr. Wheelhouse, Mr. Ridley*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 80] 885

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

QUEEN'S SPEECH—HER MAJESTY'S ANSWER TO THE ADDRESS *reported* .. 886

Leases Bill [Bill 30]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Marten*) .. 886

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Mr. Alderman Cotton.*)

Leases Bill—continued.

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*
Main Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* to a Select Committee.

And, on March 2, Committee *nominated*:—List of the Committee .. 895

Municipal Corporations (Property Qualification Abolition) Bill [Bill 43]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Mundella*) .. 895
After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Tuesday* next.

Commons Act (1876) Amendment Bill [Bill 61]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Mundella*) .. 899
After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Wednesday* next.

LORDS, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19.

Railway Brakes—Question, Earl De La Warr; Answer, Lord Henniker 901

Russia—The Explosion at the Winter Palace—Question, Observations, Earl Granville; Reply, The Earl of Beaconsfield 901

Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement (Scotland) Act (1875) Amendment Bill (No. 8)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a,"—(*The Earl Beauchamp*) .. 902
Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2^a accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Monday* next.

Public Health—Trichinosis—School Ship "Cornwall"—Question, Observations, Lord Thurlow; Reply, Earl Beauchamp .. 903

Relief of Distress (Ireland)—Question, Observations, The Earl of Donoughmore, Lord Oranmore and Browne; Reply, The Duke of Richmond and Gordon 904

Local Courts of Bankruptcy (Ireland) Bill [H.L.]—*Presented* (*The Lord Chancellor*); read 1^a (No. 11) 906

COMMONS, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19.

QUESTIONS.

Afghanistan—The Executions at Cabul—Question, Sir Charles W. Dilke; Answer, Mr. E. Stanhope 907

Army—Return of Courts Martial—Question, Sir Patrick O'Brien; Answer, Colonel Loyd Lindsay 907

Poor Law (Ireland)—The Union of Bailieboro—Question, Mr. Biggar; Answer, Mr. J. Lowther 908

Russia and Western Asia—Lieutenant Colonel Macgregor—Questions, Mr. Grant Duff; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. E. Stanhope 908

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Afghanistan—The War—Military Equipments—Question, Mr. Gourley; Answer, Mr. E. Stanhope 912

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The Metropolitan Police—Pay and Organization—Question, Mr. W. M. Torrens; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross 913

Austria—Religious Persecution in Bohemia—Question, Mr. Alderman W. M'Arthur; Answer, Mr. Bourke 914

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Educational Returns—Question, Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth; Answer, Lord George Hamilton 915

Distress (Ireland)—Newcastle West and Londonderry—Questions, Mr. O'Donnell; Answers, Mr. J. Lowther 916

Turkey—Anglo-Turkish Convention (Appointment of Officers)—Keamil Pasha—Question, Mr. Pease; Answer, Mr. Bourke .. 917

Board of Works (Ireland)—Clare Castle Harbour and Pier—Question, Mr. Finigan; Answer, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson 918

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Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill [Bill 1]—

Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress* 16*th February*] 923

After long time spent therein, Committee report Progress; to sit again *To-morrow.*

Ancient Monuments Bill [Bill 51]—

Bill *considered* in Committee 1019

After short time spent therein, Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

Glebe Loan (Ireland) Amendment Act (1878) Amendment Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Errington, Mr. O'Conor, Mr. Dease*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 81] .. 1020

Parliamentary Franchise Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Elliot, Mr. Hunter Rodwell, Mr. Serjeant Spinks*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 82] 1020

Medical Act (1858) Amendment (No. 3) Bill—
Ordered, That the Select Committee on Medical Act (1858) Amendment (No. 3) Bill do consist of Seventeen Members:—List of the Committee 1020

Kitchen and Refreshment Rooms (House of Commons)—
Ordered, That a Standing Committee be appointed to control the arrangements of the Kitchen and Refreshment Rooms, in the department of the Serjeant at Arms attending this House:—List of the Committee 1020

General Police and Improvement (Scotland) Provisional Order (Broughty Ferry) Bill—*Ordered* (*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Secretary Cross*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 83] 1020

LORDS, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20.

Afghanistan—The Policy of the Government—Address for Papers—
Moved, That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for Copy of any Correspondence found at Cabul between the late Ameer Shere Ali Khan and the Russian Authorities in Turkestan or St. Petersburgh,—(*The Duke of Argyll*) ... 1021
After long debate, Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn*.

COMMONS, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

Provisional Order Bills—Resolution—
Ordered, That all Bills for confirming Provisional Orders or Certificates shall be set down for consideration, each day, in a separate List, after the Private Business, and arranged in the same order as that prescribed by the Standing Orders for Private Bills; and every such Bill, when or so far as it is unopposed, shall after the Second Reading stand referred to the Committee constituted by Standing Order for unopposed Private Bills, and shall be subject to the same Rules and Orders of the House, so far as they are applicable,—(*The Chairman of Ways and Means*) 1098

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IRISH POOR LAW UNIONS AND THE SEED SUPPLY BILL—Question, Major Nolan; Answer, Mr. J. Lowther 1108

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

PARLIAMENT—PRIVILEGE—MR. PLIMSOLL—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Complaint made to the House [17th February]:—Question again proposed:—Debate *resumed* 1108
After short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Moved, "That, in the opinion of this House, the conduct of the honourable Member for Derby in publishing printed placards denouncing the part taken by two honourable Members of this House in the proceedings of the House was calculated to interfere with the due discharge of the duties of a Member of this House, and is a breach of its Privileges:—But this House, having regard to the withdrawal by the honourable Member for Derby of the expressions to which the honourable Member for Westminster has drawn its attention, is of opinion that no further action on its part is necessary,"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

After short debate, *Previous Question* proposed, "That that Question be now put,"—(*Sir William Harcourt:*)—After further debate, *Previous Question* put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 189, Noes 127; Majority 62.—(Div. List, No. 16.)
Main Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 182, Noes 116; Majority 66.—(Div. List, No. 17.)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (ORDER IN DEBATE)—RESOLUTIONS (MR. NEWDEGATE)—Question, Mr. Newdegate; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 1158

Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill [Bill 1]—
Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress* 19*th February*] 1159
After short time spent therein, Bill *reported;* as amended, to be *considered* on *Monday* next, and to be *printed.* [Bill 84.]

TURNPIKE ACTS CONTINUANCE ACT, 1879—
Select Committee *appointed*, "to inquire into the Fifth Schedule of 'The Annual Turnpike Acts Continuance Act, 1879:'"—List of the Committee 1163

LORDS, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23.

Page

Settled Land Bill—
Conveyancing and Law of Property Bill—
Solicitors Remuneration Bill—
Limitation of Actions Bill—

Bill for facilitating sales, leases, and other dispositions of settled land, and for promoting the execution of improvements thereon:
Bill for simplifying and improving the practice of conveyancing, and for vesting in trustees, mortgagees, and others, various powers commonly conferred by provisions inserted in settlements, mortgagees, wills, and other instruments; and for amending in various particulars the law of property; and for other purposes:
Bill for making better provision respecting the remuneration of solicitors in conveyancing, and other non-contentious business: And
Bill for amending the law relating to the limitation of actions—*Presented* (*The Lord Chancellor*) 1164
After short debate, Bills read 1^{a}. (Nos. 14, 15, 16, and 17.)

Seeds (Ireland) Bill (No. 10)—
Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee upon the said Bill,"—(*The Lord President*) 1182
Motion *agreed to;* House in Committee accordingly.
Amendments made; the Report thereof to be received *To-morrow;* and Bill to be *printed,* as amended. (No. 18.)

COMMONS, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23.

NOTICE OF RESOLUTIONS.

Business of the House (Order in Debate)—Notice of Resolutions, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 1183

QUESTIONS.

Water Supply (Metropolis)—Questions, Mr. Fawcett; Answers, Mr. Assheton Cross 1184
Water Supply (England and Wales)—Question, Mr. Monk; Answer, Mr. Sclater-Booth 1185
Railways and Canals—Through Rates—Question, Mr. Arthur Peel; Answer, Viscount Sandon 1185
Treaty of Berlin—Article 44—Roumania—Question, Mr. Serjeant Simon; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 1186
Criminal Law—Execution at Manchester—Question, Mr. Pease; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross 1187
Landlord and Tenant (Ireland)—Notice to Quit—Question, The O'Donoghue; Answer, Mr. J. Lowther 1188
Congress of Berlin—Protocol 18—Ottoman Bondholders—Question, Mr. Rylands; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer .. 1189
Imprisonment for Debt—Legislation—Question, Mr. Anderson; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross 1190
Municipal Corporations—Legislation—Question, Mr. Richard; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 1190
Mines Act, 1872—Employment of Boys in Mines—Question, Mr. Macdonald; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross 1191
Coal Mines—The Leycett Colliery Explosion—Question, Mr. Macdonald; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross 1191

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POST OFFICE—PRIVATE TELEGRAPH WIRES—Questions, Mr. Gray; Answers, Lord John Manners 1191

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (IRELAND)—Question, Mr. Gray; Answer, Mr. J. Lowther 1192

PRISONS (IRELAND) ACT—INFIRMARY AND GAOL SURGEONS—Question, Mr. Errington; Answer, Mr. J. Lowther 1192

APPOINTMENT OF THE REGISTRAR GENERAL—DR. FARR—Question, Mr. Lyon Playfair; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer .. 1193

CITY OF LONDON—GRATUITIES TO OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION—Question, Mr. W. H. James; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross 1193

RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND)—Questions, Mr. Mitchell Henry, Mr. Gray; Answers, Mr. J. Lowther 1194

SOUTH AFRICA—BASUTOLAND—Questions, Mr. Chamberlain; Answers, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach 1195

NAVY—H.M.S. "WIVERN"—Question, Captain Pim; Answer, Mr. W. H. Smith 1196

ARMY—SOUTH AFRICA—ALLEGED MISCONDUCT OF TROOPS—Question, Mr. Whitwell; Answer, Colonel Stanley 1196

TURKEY—MURDER OF MR. OGLE—Question, Mr. H. Samuelson; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 1197

GREECE—CAPTURE OF COLONEL AND MRS. SYNGE BY BRIGANDS—Question, Mr. H. Samuelson; Answer, Mr. Bourke 1198

MOTIONS.

PARLIAMENT—PRIVILEGE—INTERFERENCE OF PEERS IN ELECTIONS—HON. MAJOR JOCELYN—RESOLUTION—

Moved, "That the language of Major Jocelyn complained of to this House is a Breach of Privilege, and that the conduct of the Earl Cadogan as complained of to the House is also a Breach of the Privileges of this House,"—(*Mr. Sullivan*) 1198

Previous Question proposed, "That that Question be now put,"—(*Sir William Harcourt:*)—After short debate, *Previous Question* put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 15, Noes 229; Majority 214.—(Div. List, No. 18.)

PARLIAMENT—PRIVILEGE—LONDON NEWSPAPERS—RESOLUTION—

Moved, "That the article entitled 'Our Brilliant Brethren' in the 'World' of the 18th instant, and the articles in the 'Morning Advertiser' of the 6th, 13th, 20th, and 21st instant, the 'Daily Telegraph' of the 9th, 12th, 13th, and 23rd instant, and the 'Pall Mall Gazette' of the 21st instant, read to this House, contain breaches of the Privileges of this House,"—(*Mr. O'Donnell*) 1214

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House do now proceed to the Orders of the Day,"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Question put, and *negatived.*
Words *added:*—Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill [Bill 84]—
Bill, as amended, *considered* 1226
After short debate, Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

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Criminal Code Bill [Bill 2]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Attorney General*) 1236

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time.

Moved, "That the said Bill be referred to a Select Committee,"—(*Mr. Attorney General*:)—Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill referred to a Select Committee.

SUPPLY—*considered* in Committee—CIVIL SERVICE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1879-80.

(In the Committee.)

CLASS I.—PUBLIC WORKS AND BUILDINGS.

(1.) £2,924, Royal Palaces.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1248

(2.) £300, Marlborough House.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* .. 1250

(3.) £5,500, Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens.

(4.) £6,700, Public Buildings.

(5.) £1,400, Furniture of Public Offices.

(6.) £150, Metropolitan Police Court Buildings.

(7.) £36,404, New Courts of Justice and Offices.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1251

(8.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £11,111, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1880, for the Erection, Repairs, and Maintenance of the several Public Buildings under the Department of the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland" .. 1256

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £9,071, be granted, &c.,"—(*Mr. O'Shaughnessy*:)—After short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Original Question again proposed 1258

After short debate, Original Question put, and *agreed to*.

(9.) £5,000, Shannon Navigation.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* .. 1261

(10.) £8,386, Diplomatic and Consular Buildings.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1262

CLASS II.—SALARIES AND EXPENSES OF PUBLIC DEPARTMENTS.

(11.) £1,250, Treasury.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1262

(12.) £2,400, Foreign Office.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* 1266

(13.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £2,921, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1880, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Charity Commission for England and Wales" .. 1267

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £1,921, be granted, &c.,"—(*Mr. James*:)—After short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Original Question put, and *agreed to*.

Moved, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. Monk*:)—After short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn*.

(14.) £1,085, Civil Service Commission.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* .. 1271

(15.) £16,763, Local Government Board.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* .. 1271

(16.) £600, National Debt Office.

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow*; Committee to sit again upon *Wednesday*.

Ancient Monuments Bill [Bill 51]—

Bill, as amended, *considered* 1274

Bill to be read the third time *To-morrow*.

MOTIONS.

Census Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Sclater-Booth, Mr. Secretary Cross, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Salt*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 85] 1275

Census (Scotland) Bill—*Ordered* (*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Secretary Cross*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 86] 1275

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ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Strensall Common Bill [Bill 60]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time," — (*Lord Eustace Cecil*) 1382

Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Thursday.*

Ancient Monuments Bill [Bill 51]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read the third time,"—(*Sir John Lubbock*) 1383

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

Co-operative Stores—

Select Committee of last Session *re-appointed*, "to inquire into the constitution and operations of certain Trading Societies, trading under the name of Co-operative Stores, and to ascertain whether they are exempted from taxes and imposts to which the trading community are liable:"—List of the Committee 1384

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

County Courts Bill [Bill 6]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Norwood*) .. 1385

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Mr. Wheelhouse.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now,' stand part of the Question:" —After debate, Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Main Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

Hypothec Abolition (Scotland) Bill [Bill 34]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Vans Agnew*) 1410

After debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Tuesday* next.

Blind and Deaf-Mute Children Bill [Bill 41]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Wheelhouse*) 1426

It being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

Supreme Court of Judicature (District Courts) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Joseph Cowen, Mr. Ripley, Mr. Rowley Hill, Mr. Eustace Smith*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 87] 1426

Cruelty to Animals Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Holt, Mr. Ashley, Mr. Hardcastle, Sir Eardley Wilmot, Mr. Charles Wilson*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 88] .. 1426

Middlesex Land Registry Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Osborne Morgan, Mr. Gregory, Sir Sydney Waterlow*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 89] 1426

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South Western (of London) District Post Office Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Lord John Manners*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 90] .. 1426

Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) Provisional Order Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. James Lowther*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 91] 1427

Patents for Inventions Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Anderson, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Dalrymple, Mr. Alexander Brown*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 92] 1427

LORDS, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26.

Seeds (Ireland) Bill (Nos. 10, 18)—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3^a,"—(*The Lord President*) .. 1427
After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 3^a accordingly, with the Amendments, and *passed*, and sent to the Commons.

ARMY—THE AUXILIARY FORCES—THE EASTER MONDAY VOLUNTEER REVIEW—ADDRESS FOR A PAPER—
Moved, That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for Copy of the Despatch of General Sir Hope Grant on the character of Volunteer Easter Monday field days,—(*The Lord Campbell*) 1430
After short debate, Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn*.

COMMONS, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26.

QUESTIONS.

MEDICAL STAFF (INDIA)—Question, Mr. Lyon Playfair; Answer, Mr. E. Stanhope 1435
LIGHTHOUSES, IRELAND (WEST COAST)—Question, Mr. Lea; Answer, Viscount Sandon 1435
AFGHANISTAN—GENERAL ROBERTS'S REPORT—Question, Sir Charles W. Dilke; Answer, Mr. E. Stanhope 1436
POST OFFICE TELEGRAMS—DISCLOSURE OF PRIVATE TELEGRAMS—Questions, Lord Randolph Churchill, Major Nolan; Answers, Lord John Manners 1436
SOUTH AFRICA—THE ZULU WAR—GENERAL CREALOCK'S REPORT—Question, Sir Edward Watkin; Answer, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach .. 1437
FRAUDS BY FIDUCIARY AGENTS—LEGISLATION—Question, Mr. Burt; Answer, The Attorney General 1438
EGYPTIAN AFFAIRS—Question, Mr. W. Cartwright; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 1439
THE CHARITY COMMISSION—SITTINGS OF THE BOARD—Question, Mr. Pemberton; Answer, Lord George Hamilton 1439
PARLIAMENTARY AND MUNICIPAL REGISTRATION ACT, 1878 (41 & 42 VICT. c. 26, s. 5)—Question, Mr. Chamberlain; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross 1440
SELECT COMMITTEE ON WINE DUTIES—THE REPORT—Question, Mr. C. M. Palmer; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 1440
COMPANIES ACT, 1879—JOINT STOCK BANKS—Question, Mr. Heygate; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 1440
SOUTH AFRICA—THE ZULU WAR—THE FIELD OF ISANDHLWANA—Question, Mr. A. M'Arthur; Answer, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach 1441
NAVY—THE ROYAL MARINES—THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE—Question, Mr. Anderson; Answer, Mr. W. H. Smith 1442
ARMY—VOLUNTARY RETIREMENT OF OFFICERS—Question, Viscount Lewisham; Answer, Colonel Stanley 1443

INDIA OFFICE—SHIPPING CONTRACTS—Questions, Mr. Puleston, Mr. E. Jenkins; Answers, Mr. E. Stanhope 1443

AFRICA (WEST COAST)—MEDINA AND LIBERIA—Question, Mr. Puleston; Answer, Mr. Bourke 1444

INDIA—INDIGO CULTIVATION IN BEHAR—Question, Mr. O'Donnell; Answer, Mr. E. Stanhope 1444

AFGHANISTAN—Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 1445

RAILWAY SERVANTS COMPENSATION FOR INJURY—Questions, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Sullivan; Answers, Mr. Raikes, Mr. Speaker 1445

MERCHANT SHIPPING (GRAIN CARGOES)—Observations, Mr. Plimsoll; Reply, Mr. Speaker; Question, Sir Wilfrid Lawson; Answer, Sir Charles Russell 1446

PARLIAMENT—ORDER—VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH — Question, Mr. Biggar; Answer, Mr. Speaker 1448

MOTIONS.

ORDERS OF THE DAY—

Moved, "That the Orders of the Day be postponed until after the Notice of Motion relating to the Business of the House (Order in Debate),"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) 1449

After short debate, Motion *agreed to.*

PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (ORDER IN DEBATE)—RESOLUTIONS—

Moved, "That, whenever any Member shall have been named by the Speaker, or by the Chairman of a Committee of the whole House, as disregarding the authority of the Chair, or abusing the Rules of the House by persistently and wilfully obstructing the business of the House, or otherwise, then, if the offence has been committed in the House, the Speaker shall forthwith put the question, on a Motion being made, no amendment, adjournment, or debate being allowed, 'That such Member be suspended from the service of the House during the remainder of that day's sitting;' and, if the offence has been committed in a Committee of the whole House, the Chairman shall, on a Motion being made, put the same question in a similar way, and if the Motion is carried shall forthwith suspend the proceedings of the Committee and report the circumstance to the House; and the Speaker shall thereupon put the same question, without amendment, adjournment, or debate, as if the offence had been committed in the House itself. If any Member be suspended three times in one Session, under this Order, his suspension on the third occasion shall continue for one week, and until a Motion has been made, upon which it shall be decided, at one sitting, by the House, whether the suspension shall then cease, or for what longer period it shall continue; and, on the occasion of such Motion, the Member may, if he desires it, be heard in his place,"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) 1450

After debate, Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "during a Debate, whether in the House or in Committee, any Member may draw the attention of the Chair to misconduct on the part of a Member who in addressing the House may persistently endeavour to prevent the Progress of Business, by rising in his place and taking Notice that the Member for   is wilfully obstructing the Business of this House.

"Whereupon (unless in the judgment of the Chair the interruption is frivolous and unfounded, in which case he shall call on the Member in possession of the House to proceed), Mr. Speaker (or the Chairman) shall forthwith put the Question 'That   be not further heard,' which Question shall be decided without amendment or debate, but the Motion shall not be carried by a majority of less than two-thirds if a Division is called.

"Any Member so put to silence shall stand suspended from the service of the House for one week.

"Any Member put to silence twice in the same Session shall stand suspended from the service of the House for one calendar month, and for such further period until he shall have submitted himself to the House and given assurance that he will not so offend again,"—(*Mr. Sampson Lloyd*,)—instead thereof 1500

PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (ORDER IN DEBATE)—RESOLUTIONS—*continued.*

Question proposed, "That the word 'whenever' stand part of the Question:"—After further debate, *Moved,* "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Shaw:*)—Question put, and *agreed to:*—Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

LORDS, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27.

GALLERY OF CASTS FROM THE ANTIQUE—MOTION FOR PAPERS—

Moved that there be laid before the House,

A memorial presented to the Prime Minister in August 1877 by a Committee presided over by the Duke of Westminster on the subject of the formation of a Gallery of Casts from the Antique:

Also, a communication from the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to the Duke of Westminster on the same subject dated 16th July 1879,—(*The Earl Cowper*) 1541

After short debate, Motion *agreed to.*

COAL MINES—LEYCETT COLLIERY EXPLOSION—Question, Earl De La Warr; Answer, Earl Beauchamp 1545

Moved that there be laid before the House,

Report of William St. James Wheelhouse, Esq., Q.C., M.P., on the Leycett Colliery Accident of September 1879,—(*The Earl De La Warr.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

STATE OF IRELAND—MOTION FOR RETURNS—

Moved, That there be laid before the House,

"Return of the number of ejectments from agricultural holdings that have been served, the number in which decrees have been pronounced, and the number in which decrees have been executed in each county in Ireland every year from the 1st of January 1860 to the 1st of January 1880; the Return to distinguish between ejectments for non-payment of rent, or on notice to quit, or for breach of contract, or for any other cause: Also, Return of the number of cases of intimidation in Ireland to prevent the payment of rent or occupation of land which came under the notice of the police during the year 1879, and the number of prosecutions undertaken and convictions obtained in such cases,"—(*The Earl of Dunraven*) 1545

After short debate, Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

COMMONS, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

Chester Gas Bill—Standing Order 109 read 1565

Moved, That the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means be discharged from attendance on the Chester Gas Bill, and that the Chairman of the Committee on Standing Orders be appointed Chairman of the Committee on the said Bill,—(*The Chairman of Ways and Means.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

QUESTIONS.

GAME LAWS—LEGISLATION—Question, Sir David Wedderburn; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross 1565

POOR LAW—DISSOLUTION OF THE WITHAM UNION—Question, Mr. Round; Answer, Mr. Sclater-Booth 1566

ARMY—OFFICERS OF THE STAFF ACTING AS NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENTS IN THE FIELD—Questions, Mr. Hopwood, Sir Charles W. Dilke; Answers, Mr. E. Stanhope 1567

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INDIA—THE WYNAAD GOLD FIELDS—Question, Mr. Puleston; Answer, Mr. E. Stanhope 1568
LORD CLERK REGISTER (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1879—THE REGULATIONS—Question, Mr. Fraser Mackintosh; Answer, The Lord Advocate .. 1568
RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND)—NENAGH—Questions, Mr. O'Donnell; Answers, Mr. J. Lowther 1569
CRIME (IRELAND)—ATTACK ON TENANT RIGHT MEETING AT PORTADOWN—Question, Mr. O'Donnell; Answer, Mr. J. Lowther 1570
MERCHANT SHIPS—THE "LOUISA FLETCHER" OF LIVERPOOL (UNSEAWORTHINESS)—Question, Mr. Burt; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross .. 1570
TURKEY—MURDER OF MR. OGLE—Question, Mr. E. Jenkins; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer 1571
CHANNEL ISLANDS—JERSEY—PAYMENT OF THE JUDGE—Question, Mr. Waddy; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross 1572
LAW AND JUSTICE—INSTRUCTION OF THE POLICE IN AMBULANCE DRILL—Question, Mr. Elliot; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross 1572

MOTION.

ORDERS OF THE DAY—STANDING ORDER OF SUPPLY AND WAYS AND MEANS—RESOLUTION—

Moved, "That the Standing Order relative to Supply or Ways and Means standing the first Order of the Day on Friday be read, and suspended.

"That the Committee of Supply be deferred until after the Order of the Day for resuming the Adjourned Debate on Business of the House (Order in Debate),"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) 1572

After short debate, Motion *agreed to.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (ORDER IN DEBATE)—RESOLUTION—ADJOURNED DEBATE [SECOND NIGHT]—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [26th February]:—Question again proposed, "That the word 'whenever' stand part of the Question:"—Debate *resumed* .. 1580

After long debate, Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed, in line 1, after the word "whenever," to insert the words "before one o'clock a.m.,"—(*Mr. Biggar*) 1638

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted:"—After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 14, Noes 290; Majority 276.—(Div. List, No. 23.)

Amendment proposed, in line 1, after the word "Member," to insert the words "at least one hundred Members being present,"—(*Mr. O'Donnell*) 1640

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted:"—After debate, *Moved,* "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*The O'Donoghue:*)—After further debate, Question put, and *agreed to:*—Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do take the Chair To-morrow, at Twelve of the clock,"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "Twelve," and insert the word "Two,"—(*Mr. Callan.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'Twelve' stand part of the Question:"—Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 87, Noes 15; Majority 72.—(Div. List, No. 24.)

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

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India Stock (Powers of Attorney) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Edward Stanhope, Lord George Hamilton*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 93] 1669

COMMONS, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (ORDER IN DEBATE)—RESOLUTION—ADJOURNED DEBATE [THIRD DAY]—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [26th February]:—And which Amendment was,

In line 1, after the word "Member," to insert the words "at least one hundred Members being present,"—(*Mr. O'Donnell.*)

Question again proposed, "That those words be there inserted:"—Debate *resumed* 1669
Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 8, Noes 68; Majority 60.—(Div. List, No. 25.)

Amendment proposed, in lines 2 and 3, to leave out the words "or by the Chairman of a Committee of the whole House,"—(*Mr. Callan.*)
Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 191, Noes 17; Majority 174.—(Div. List, No. 26.)

Amendment proposed, in line 4, to leave out the words "or otherwise,"—(*Mr. Finigan*) 1688
Question proposed, "That the words 'or otherwise' stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed,

In line 4, after the word "then," to insert the words "the Member so named shall be permitted to offer such explanation, defence, or apology as he may see fit for a time not exceeding ten minutes, after which,"—(*Sir George Campbell*) 1691

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted:"—After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 25, Noes 195; Majority 170.—(Div. List, No. 27.)

Amendment proposed, in line 8, after the word "House," to insert the words "other and except that of voting,"—(*Mr. Courtney*) .. 1693
Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted:"—After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 42, Noes 172; Majority 130.

Division List, Ayes and Noes 1694

Amendment proposed,

In line 12, after the word "House," to insert the words "when the Member so named shall be permitted to offer such explanation, defence, or apology as he may see fit for a time not exceeding ten minutes, after which,"—(*Mr. Callan*) 1696

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *negatived.*

Amendment proposed, in line 15, to leave out the words "three times," and insert the word "twice,"—(*The Marquess of Hartington*) .. 1696
Question proposed, "That the words 'three times' stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed, in line 16, after the word "made," to insert the words "at the commencement of Public Business,"—(*Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice*) 1702
Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted:"—Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

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Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate)—Resolutions—*continued.*

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the Question, to add the words, "Provided always, That nothing in this Resolution shall be taken to deprive the House of the power of proceeding against any Member according to ancient usages,"—(*Mr. William Edward Forster*) .. 1702

Question proposed, "That those words be there added:"—Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question, as amended, put.

After short debate, Main Question, as amended, *agreed to.*

Resolved, That, whenever any Member shall have been named by the Speaker, or by the Chairman of a Committee of the whole House, as disregarding the authority of the Chair, or abusing the Rules of the House by persistently and wilfully obstructing the business of the House, or otherwise, then, if the offence has been committed in the House, the Speaker shall forthwith put the question, on a Motion being made, no amendment, adjournment, or debate being allowed, 'That such Member be suspended from the service of the House during the remainder of that day's sitting;' and, if the offence has been committed in a Committee of the whole House, the Chairman shall, on a Motion being made, put the same question in a similar way, and if the Motion is carried shall forthwith suspend the proceedings of the Committee and report the circumstance to the House; and the Speaker shall thereupon put the same question, without amendment, adjournment, or debate, as if the offence had been committed in the House itself. If any Member be suspended three times in one Session, under this Order, his suspension on the third occasion shall continue for one week, and until a Motion has been made, upon which it shall be decided, at one sitting, by the House, whether the suspension shall then cease, or for what longer period it shall continue; and, on the occasion of such Motion, the Member may, if he desires it, be heard in his place: Provided always, That nothing in this Resolution shall be taken to deprive the House of the power of proceeding against any Member according to ancient usages.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the said Resolution be a Standing Order of this House,"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) .. 1706

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the last Session of a Parliament, it is inexpedient to constitute an untried experiment by which the proceedings of Parliament may be materially altered, and the privileges of Members lessened, as a Standing Order of the House,"—(*Mr. Dillwyn,*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 166, Noes 20; Majority 146.—(Div. List, No. 29.)
Main Question put, and *agreed to:*—*Ordered,* That the said Resolution be a Standing Order of this House.

Beer Dealers' Retail Licences Bill [Bill 65]—
Order for Committee read 1709
After short debate, Committee *deferred* till *Monday* next.

TWENTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

LORDS.

SAT FIRST.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1880.

The Duke of Portland, after the death of his cousin.
The Viscount St. Vincent, after the death of his father.
The Lord Chelmsford, after the death of his father.
The Lord Lawrence, after the death of his father.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6.

The Earl of Ashburnham, after the death of his father.
The Lord Skene (Earl of Fife), after the death of his father.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12.

The Earl of Durham, after the death of his father.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23.

The Lord Clanwilliam (Earl of Clanwilliam), after the death of his father.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27.

The Lord Ponsonby, after the death of his brother.

COMMONS.

NEW WRITS ISSUED.

DURING RECESS—

For *Elgin and Nairn Counties*, *v.* Honble. Alexander William Duff, commonly called Viscount Macduff, now Earl of Fife, called up to the House of Peers.
For *Sheffield Borough*, *v.* Right honble. John Arthur Roebuck, deceased.
For *Liverpool Borough*, *v.* John Torr, esquire, deceased.
For *Donegal County*, *v.* William Wilson, esquire, deceased.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1880.

For *Barnstaple Borough*, *v.* Samuel Danks Waddy, esquire, Chiltern Hundreds.
For *Southwark Borough*, *v.* John Locke, esquire, deceased.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20.

For *Kilkenny Borough*, *v.* Benjamin Whitworth, esquire, Manor of Northstead.
For *Drogheda*, *v.* William Hogarty O'Leary, esquire, deceased.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27.

For *Norfolk* (*Western Division*), *v.* Sir William Bagge, deceased.

NEW MEMBERS SWORN.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1880.

Elgin and Nairn Counties—Sir George Macpherson Grant, baronet.
Donegal County—Thomas Lea, esquire.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10.

Liverpool Borough—Edward Whitley, esquire.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13.

Sheffield—Samuel Danks Waddy, esquire.
Barnstaple—Viscount Lymington.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16.

Southwark—Edward George Clarke, esquire.

THE MINISTRY

Of the Right Honourable the Earl of BEACONSFIELD,

At the Commencement of the Seventh Session of the 21st Parliament,

February 5, 1880.

THE CABINET.

First Lord of the Treasury	Right Hon. Earl of Beaconsfield, K.G.
Lord Chancellor	Right Hon. Earl Cairns.
President of the Council	His Grace the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, K.G.
Lord Privy Seal	His Grace the Duke of Northumberland.
Chancellor of the Exchequer	Right Hon. Sir Stafford Henry Northcote, Bt.
Secretary of State, Home Department	Right Hon. Richard Assheton Cross.
Secretary of State, Foreign Department	Most Hon. Marquess of Salisbury.
Secretary of State for the Colonies	Right Hon. Sir Michael Edward Hicks-Beach, Bt.
Secretary of State for War	Right Hon. Frederick Arthur Stanley.
Secretary of State for India	Right Hon. Viscount Cranbrook.
First Lord of the Admiralty	Right Hon. William Henry Smith.
Postmaster General	Right Hon. Lord John J. R. Manners.
President of the Board of Trade	Right Hon. Viscount Sandon.

NOT IN THE CABINET.

Field Marshal Commanding in Chief	H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, K.G.
Chief Commissioner of Works and Public Buildings	Right Hon. Gerard James Noel.
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Right Hon. Thomas Edward Taylor.
Vice President of the Committee of Council for Education	Right Hon. Lord George Hamilton.
President of the Local Government Board	Right Hon. George Sclater-Booth.
Lords of the Treasury	Viscount Crichton. Rowland Winn, Esq. Sir James Dalrymple Horn Elphinstone, Bt.
Lords of the Admiralty	Admiral George Greville Wellesley, Rear Admiral A. W. A. Hood, Rear Admiral Lord Gilford, and Sir Massey Lopes, Bart.
Joint Secretaries of the Treasury	Sir William Hart Dyke, Bart. Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Bt.
Secretary of the Admiralty	Hon. Algernon T. Fulke Egerton.
Secretary to the Board of Trade	J. G. Talbot, Esq.
Secretary to the Local Government Board	Thomas Salt, Esq.
Under Secretary, Home Department	Sir Matthew White Ridley, Bt.
Under Secretary, Foreign Department	Hon. Robert Bourke.
Under Secretary for Colonies	Right Hon. Earl Cadogan.
Under Secretary for War	Right Hon. Viscount Bury.
Under Secretary for India	Hon. Edward Stanhope.
Paymaster General	Right Hon. Stephen Cave.
Judge Advocate	Right Hon. George A. F. C. Bentinck.
Attorney General	Sir John Holker, Knt.
Solicitor General	Sir Hardinge S. Giffard, Knt.

SCOTLAND.

Lord Advocate	Right Hon. William Watson.
Solicitor General	John Hay A. Macdonald, Esq.

IRELAND.

Lord Lieutenant	His Grace the Duke of Marlborough, K.G.
Lord Chancellor	Right Hon. John Thomas Ball.
Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant	Right Hon. James Lowther.
Attorney General	Right Hon. Edward Gibson.
Solicitor General	H. Holmes, Esq.

QUEEN'S HOUSEHOLD.

Lord Steward	Right Hon Earl Beauchamp.
Lord Chamberlain	Right Hon. Earl of Mount Edgcumbe.
Master of the Horse	Right Hon. Earl of Bradford.
Treasurer of the Household	Right Hon. Lord Henry Thynne.
Comptroller of the Household	Right Hon. Earl of Yarmouth.
Vice Chamberlain of the Household	Viscount Barrington.
Captain of the Corps of Gentlemen at Arms	Right Hon. Earl of Coventry.
Captain of the Yeomen of the Guard	Right Hon. Lord Skelmersdale.
Master of the Buckhounds	Right Hon. Earl of Hardwicke.
Chief Equerry and Clerk Marshal	Lord Alfred H. Paget.
Mistress of the Robes	Her Grace the Duchess of Wellington.

ROLL OF THE LORDS SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL

In the Seventh Session of the Twenty-first Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

43o VICTORIÆ 1880.

Mem.—*According to the Usage of Parliament, when the House appoints a Select Committee, the Lords appointed to serve upon it are named in the Order of their Rank, beginning with the Highest; and so, when the House sends a Committee to a Conference with the Commons, the Lord highest in Rank is called first, and the rest go forth in like Order: But when the Whole House is called over for any Purpose within the House, or for the Purpose of proceeding forth to Westminster Hall, or upon any public Solemnity, the Call begins invariably with the Junior Baron.*

His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales.

His Royal Highness Alfred Ernest Albert Duke of Edinburgh.

His Royal Highness Arthur William Patrick Albert Duke of Connaught and Strathearn.

His Royal Highness George William Frederick Charles Duke of Cambridge.

Archibald Campbell Archbishop of Canterbury.

Hugh Mac Calmont Earl Cairns, *Lord High Chancellor.*

William Archbishop of York.

Charles Henry Duke of Richmond, *Lord President of the Council.*

Algernon George Duke of Northumberland, *Lord Privy Seal.*

Henry Duke of Norfolk, *Earl Marshal of England.*

Edward Adolphus Duke of Somerset.

Charles Henry Duke of Richmond. (*In another Place as Lord President of the Council.*)

William Henry Duke of Grafton.

Henry Charles Fitzroy Duke of Beaufort.

William Amelius Aubrey de Vere Duke of Saint Albans.

George Godolphin Duke of Leeds.

Francis Charles Hastings Duke of Bedford.

William Duke of Devonshire.

John Winston Duke of Marlborough.

Charles Cecil John Duke of Rutland.

William Alexander Louis Stephen Duke of Brandon. (*Duke of Hamilton.*)

William John Arthur Charles James Duke of Portland.

William Drogo Duke of Manchester.

Henry Pelham Archibald Douglas Duke of Newcastle.

Algernon George Duke of Northumberland. (*In another Place as Lord Privy Seal.*)

His Royal Highness Ernest Augustus William Adolphus George Frederick Duke of Cumberland and Teviotdale.

Arthur Richard Duke of Wellington.

Richard Plantagenet Campbell Duke of Buckingham and Chandos.

George Granville William Duke of Sutherland.

Harry George Duke of Cleveland.

Hugh Lupus Duke of Westminster.

John Marquess of Winchester.

John Sholto Marquess of Queensberry. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

Henry Charles Keith Marquess of Lansdowne.

John Villiers Stuart Marquess Townshend.

Robert Arthur Talbot Marquess of Salisbury.

John Alexander Marquess of Bath.

James Marquess of Abercorn. (*Duke of Abercorn.*)

Francis Hugh George Marquess of Hertford.

John Patrick Marquess of Bute.

William Alleyne Marquess of Exeter.

William Marquess of Northampton.

John Charles Marquess Camden.

Henry Marquess of Anglesey.

William Henry Hugh Marquess of Cholmondeley.

Ernest Augustus Charles Marquess of Ailesbury.

Frederick William John Marquess of Bristol.

Archibald Marquess of Ailsa.

George Augustus Constantine Marquess of Normanby.

George Frederick Samuel Marquess of Ripon.

William Marquess of Abergavenny.

Frederick Earl Beauchamp, *Lord Steward of the Household.*

William Henry Earl of Mount Edgcumbe, *Lord Chamberlain of the Household.*

Charles Henry John Earl of Shrewsbury.

Edward Henry Earl of Derby.

Francis Power Plantagenet Earl of Huntingdon.

George Robert Charles Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery.

William Reginald Earl of Devon.

Henry Charles Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire.

Rudolph William Basil Earl of Denbigh.

Francis William Henry Earl of Westmorland.

Montague Earl of Lindsey.

George Harry Earl of Stamford and Warrington.

George James Earl of Winchilsea and Nottingham.

George Philip Earl of Chesterfield.

John William Earl of Sandwich.

Arthur Algernon Earl of Essex.

William George Earl of Carlisle.

Walter Francis Earl of Doncaster. (*Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry.*)

Anthony Earl of Shaftesbury.

———— Earl of Berkeley.

Montagu Earl of Abingdon.

Richard George Earl of Scarbrough.

George Thomas Earl of Albemarle.

George William Earl of Coventry.

Victor Albert George Earl of Jersey.

William Henry Earl Poulett.

Sholto John Earl of Morton. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

Walter Henry Earl of Mar and Kellie. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

Claude Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorn. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

George Earl of Haddington. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

David Graham Drummond Earl of Airlie. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

Dunbar James Earl of Selkirk. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

Thomas Barnes Earl of Dundonald. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

Sewallis Edward Earl Ferrers.

William Walter Earl of Dartmouth.

Charles Earl of Tankerville.

Heneage Earl of Aylesford.

Francis Thomas De Grey Earl Cowper.

Arthur Philip Earl Stanhope.

Thomas Augustus Wolstenholme Earl of Macclesfield.

Douglas Beresford Malise Ronald Earl Graham. (*Duke of Montrose.*)

William Frederick Earl Waldegrave.

Bertram Earl of Ashburnham.

Charles Wyndham Earl of Harrington.

Isaac Newton Earl of Portsmouth.

George Guy Earl Brooke and Earl of Warwick.

Augustus Edward Earl of Buckinghamshire.

William Thomas Spencer Earl Fitzwilliam.

Dudley Francis Earl of Guilford.

Charles Philip Earl of Hardwicke.

Henry Edward Earl of Ilchester,

Reginald Windsor Earl De La Warr.

Jacob Earl of Radnor.

John Poyntz Earl Spencer.

Allen Alexander Earl Bathurst.

Arthur Wills John Wellington Blundell Trumbull Earl of Hillsborough. (*Marquess of Downshire.*)

Edward Hyde Earl of Clarendon.

William David Earl of Mansfield.

John James Hugh Henry Earl Strange. (*Duke of Atholl.*)

William Henry Earl of Mount Edgcumbe. (*In another Place as Lord Chamberlain of the Household.*)

Hugh Earl Fortescue.

Henry Howard Molyneux Earl of Carnarvon.

George Henry Earl Cadogan.

James Howard Earl of Malmesbury.

John Vansittart Danvers Earl of Lanesborough. (*Elected for Ireland.*)
Stephen Earl of Mount Cashell. (*Elected for Ireland.*)
Henry John Reuben Earl of Portarlington. (*Elected for Ireland.*)
Hugh Earl of Annesley. (*Elected for Ireland.*)
John Earl of Erne. (*Elected for Ireland.*)
Charles Francis Arnold Earl of Wicklow. (*Elected for Ireland.*)
John Henry Reginald Earl of Clonmell. (*Elected for Ireland.*)
George Charles Earl of Lucan. (*Elected for Ireland.*)
Somerset Richard Earl of Belmore. (*Elected for Ireland.*)
James Earl of Caledon. (*Elected for Ireland.*)
Francis Robert Earl of Rosslyn.
George Grimston Earl of Craven.
William Hillier Earl of Onslow.
Charles Earl of Romney.
Henry Thomas Earl of Chichester.
Thomas Earl of Wilton.
Edward James Earl of Powis.
Horatio Earl Nelson.
Lawrence Earl of Rosse. (*Elected for Ireland.*)
Sydney William Herbert Earl Manvers.
Horatio Earl of Orford.
Henry Earl Grey.
St. George Henry Earl of Lonsdale.
Dudley Earl of Harrowby.
Henry Thynne Earl of Harewood.
William Hugh Earl of Minto.
Alan Frederick Earl Cathcart.
James Walter Earl of Verulam.
Adelbert Wellington Brownlow Earl Brownlow.
William Gordon Cornwallis Earl of Saint Germans.
Albert Edmund Earl of Morley.
Orlando George Charles Earl of Bradford.
Frederick Earl Beauchamp. (*In another Place as Lord Steward of the Household.*)
William Henry Hare Earl of Bantry. (*Elected for Ireland.*)
John Earl of Eldon.
Richard William Penn Earl Howe.
Charles Somers Earl Somers.
John Edward Cornwallis Earl of Stradbroke.
George Henry Robert Charles William Earl Vane. (*Marquess of Londonderry.*)
William Pitt Earl Amherst.
John Frederick Vaughan Earl Cawdor.
William George Earl of Munster.
Robert Adam Philips Haldane Earl of Camperdown.
Thomas George Earl of Lichfield.
John George Earl of Durham.
Granville George Earl Granville.
Henry Earl of Effingham.
Henry John Earl of Ducie.
Charles Alfred Worsley Earl of Yarborough.
James Henry Robert Earl Innes. (*Duke of Roxburghe.*)
Thomas William Earl of Leicester.
William Earl of Lovelace.
Lawrence Earl of Zetland.
Charles George Earl of Gainsborough.
Francis Charles Granville Earl of Ellesmere.
George Stevens Earl of Strafford.
William John Earl of Cottenham.
Henry Richard Charles Earl Cowley.
Archibald William Earl of Winton. (*Earl of Eglintoun.*)
William Earl of Dudley.
John Francis Stanley Earl Russell.
John Earl of Kimberley.
Richard Earl of Dartrey.
William Ernest Earl of Feversham.
Frederick Temple Earl of Dufferin.
John Robert Earl Sydney.
Henry George Earl of Ravensworth.
Edward Montagu Stuart Granville Earl of Wharncliffe.
Thomas George Earl of Northbrook.
Benjamin Earl of Beaconsfield.
John Thomas Earl of Redesdale.
Hugh Mac Calmont Earl Cairns. (*In another Place as Lord High Chancellor.*)

Robert Viscount Hereford.
William Henry Viscount Strathallan. (*Elected for Scotland.*)
Henry Viscount Bolingbroke and St. John.
Evelyn Viscount Falmouth.
George Viscount Torrington.
Charles William Viscount Leinster. (*Duke of Leinster.*)
Francis Wheler Viscount Hood.
Mervyn Viscount Powerscourt. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

James Viscount Lifford. (*Elected for Ireland.*)
Edward Viscount Bangor. (*Elected for Ireland.*)
Hayes Viscount Doneraile. (*Elected for Ireland.*)
Cornwallis Viscount Hawarden. (*Elected for Ireland.*)
John Edward Leveson Viscount St. Vincent.
Robert Viscount Melville.
William Wells Viscount Sidmouth.
George Frederick Viscount Templetown. (*Elected for Ireland.*)
John Campbell Viscount Gordon. (*Earl of Aberdeen.*)
Edward Fleetwood John Viscount Exmouth.
John Luke George Viscount Hutchinson. (*Earl of Donoughmore.*)
Richard Somerset Viscount Clancarty. (*Earl of Clancarty.*)
Wellington Henry Viscount Combermere.
Henry Charles Viscount Canterbury.
Rowland Clegg Viscount Hill.
Charles Stewart Viscount Hardinge.
George Stephens Viscount Gough.
Stratford Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe.
Charles Viscount Eversley.
Charles Viscount Halifax.
Alexander Nelson Viscount Bridport.
Edward Berkeley Viscount Portman.
Edward Viscount Cardwell.
Gathorne Viscount Cranbrook.

John Bishop of London.
Joseph Barbour Bishop of Durham.
Edward Harold Bishop of Winchester.
Alfred Bishop of Llandaff.
Robert Bishop of Ripon.
John Thomas Bishop of Norwich.
James Colquhoun Bishop of Bangor.
Henry Bishop of Worcester.
Charles John Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol.
William Bishop of Chester.
Thomas Legh Bishop of St. Albans.
James Bishop of Hereford.
William Connor Bishop of Peterborough.
Christopher Bishop of Lincoln.
George Bishop of Salisbury.
Harvey Bishop of Carlisle.
Frederick Bishop of Exeter.
Arthur Charles Bishop of Bath and Wells.
John Fielder Bishop of Oxford.
James Bishop of Manchester.
Richard Bishop of Chichester.
Joshua Bishop of St. Asaph.
James Russell Bishop of Ely.
William Basil Bishop of St. David's.

Dudley Charles Lord De Ros.
Alfred Joseph Lord Mowbray.
George Manners, Lord Hastings.
Edward Southwell Lord De Clifford.
Thomas Crosby William Lord Dacre.
Charles Henry Rolle Lord Clinton.
Robert Nathaniel Cecil George Lord Zouche of Haryngworth.
Charles Edward Hastings Lord Botreaux. (*Earl of Loudoun.*)
Thomas Lord Camoys.
Henry Lord Beaumont.
Charles Edward Hastings Lord Hastings. (*Earl of Loudoun.*) (*In another place as Lord Botreaux.*)
Henry Lord Willoughby de Broke.
Sackville George Lord Conyers.
George Lord Vaux of Harrowden.
Ralph Gordon Lord Wentworth.
Alfred Thomas Townshend Lord Braye.
Robert George Lord Windsor.
St. Andrew Lord St. John of Bletso.
Frederick George Lord Howard de Walden.
William Bernard Lord Petre.
Frederick Benjamin Lord Saye and Sele.
John Francis Lord Arundell of Wardour.
John Stuart Lord Clifton. (*Earl of Darnley.*)
John Baptist Joseph Lord Dormer.
George Henry Lord Teynham.
Henry Valentine Lord Stafford.
George Frederick William Lord Byron.
Charles Hugh Lord Clifford of Chudleigh.
William Coutts Lord Ashford.
Horace Courtenay Lord Forbes. (*Elected for Scotland.*)
Alexander Lord Saltoun. (*Elected for Scotland.*)
James Lord Sinclair. (*Elected for Scotland.*)
William Buller Fullerton Lord Elphinstone. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

Charles Lord Blantyre. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

Charles John Lord Colville of Culross. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

Alexander Hugh Lord Balfour of Burley. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

Richard Edmund Saint Lawrence Lord Boyle. (*Earl of Cork and Orrery.*)

George Lord Hay. (*Earl of Kinnoul.*)

Digby Wentworth Bayard Lord Middleton.

William John Lord Monson.

Frederick George Brabazon Lord Ponsonby. (*Earl of Bessborough.*)

George Watson Lord Sondes.

Alfred Nathaniel Holden Lord Scarsdale.

George Florance Lord Boston.

Charles George Lord Lovel and Holland. (*Earl of Egmont.*)

Augustus Henry Lord Vernon.

Edward St. Vincent Lord Digby.

George Douglas Lord Sundridge. (*Duke of Argyll.*)

Edward Henry Julius Lord Hawke.

Henry Thomas Lord Foley.

Arthur de Cardonnel Lord Dinevor.

Thomas Lord Walsingham.

William Lord Bagot.

Charles Henry Lord Southampton.

John Richard Brinsley Lord Grantley.

George Bridges Harley Dennett Lord Rodney.

William Lord Berwick.

James Henry Legge Lord Sherborne.

John Henry De La Poer Lord Tyrone. (*Marquess of Waterford.*)

Henry Bentinck Lord Carleton. (*Earl of Shannon.*)

Charles Lord Suffield.

Dudley Wilmot Lord Dorchester.

Lloyd Lord Kenyon.

Charles Cornwallis Lord Braybrooke.

George Hamilton Lord Fisherwick. (*Marquess of Donegal.*)

Henry Charles Lord Gage. (*Viscount Gage.*)

Thomas John Lord Thurlow.

William George Lord Auckland.

Charles George Lord Lyttelton.

Henry George Lord Mendip. (*Viscount Clifden.*)

George Lord Stuart of Castle Stuart. (*Earl of Moray.*)

Alan Plantagenet Lord Stewart of Garlies. (*Earl of Galloway.*)

James George Henry Lord Saltersford. (*Earl of Courtown.*)

William Lord Brodrick. (*Viscount Midleton.*)

Frederick Henry William Lord Calthorpe.

Peter Robert Lord Gwydir.

Charles Robert Lord Carrington.

William Henry Lord Bolton.

George Lord Northwick.

Thomas Lyttleton Lord Lilford.

Thomas Lord Ribblesdale.

Edward Lord Dunsany. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

Theobald Fitz-Walter Lord Dunboyne. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

Edward Donough Lord Inchiquin. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

John Thomas William Lord Massy. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

Robert Lord Clonbrock. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

Edward Henry Churchill Lord Crofton. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

Dayrolles Blakeney Lord Ventry. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

Henry Francis Seymour Lord Moore. (*Marquess of Drogheda.*)

John Henry Wellington Graham Lord Loftus. (*Marquess of Ely.*)

William Lord Carysfort. (*Earl of Carysfort.*)

George Ralph Lord Abercromby.

Horace Lord Rivers.

Charles Edmund Lord Ellenborough.

Augustus Frederick Arthur Lord Sandys

Henry North Lord Sheffield. (*Earl of Sheffield.*)

John Cadwallader Lord Erskine.

George John Lord Monteagle. (*Marquess of Sligo.*)

George Arthur Hastings Lord Granard. (*Earl of Granard.*)

Hungerford Lord Crewe.

Alan Legge Lord Gardner.

John Thomas Lord Manners.

John Adrian Louis Lord Hopetoun. (*Earl of Hopetoun.*)

Richard Lord Castlemaine. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

Charles Lord Meldrum. (*Marquess of Huntly.*)

George Frederick Lord Ross. (*Earl of Glasgow.*)

William Willoughby Lord Grinstead. (*Earl of Enniskillen.*)

William Hale John Charles Lord Foxford. (*Earl of Limerick.*)

Francis George Lord Churchill.

George Robert Canning Lord Harris.

Reginald Charles Edward Lord Colchester.

Schomberg Henry Lord Ker. (*Marquess of Lothian.*)

George Henry Lord Minster. (*Marquess Conyngham.*)

James Edward William Theobald Lord Ormonde. (*Marquess of Ormonde.*)

Francis Lord Wemyss. (*Earl of Wemyss.*)

John Strange Lord Clanbrassill. (*Earl of Roden.*)

William Lygon Lord Silchester. (*Earl of Longford.*)

Clotworthy John Eyre Lord Oriel. (*Viscount Massereene.*)

Hugh Lord Delamere.

George Cecil Weld Lord Forester.

John William Lord Rayleigh.

Edric Frederic Lord Gifford.

Hubert George Lord Somerhill. (*Marquess of Clanricarde.*)

Alexander William Crawford Lord Wigan. (*Earl of Crawford and Balcarres.*)

Uchter John Mark Lord Ranfurly. (*Earl of Ranfurly.*)

George Lord De Tabley.

Charles Stuart Aubrey Lord Tenterden.

William Conyngham Lord Plunket.

William Henry Ashe Lord Heytesbury.

Archibald Philip Lord Rosebery. (*Earl of Rosebery.*)

Richard James Lord Clanwilliam. (*Earl of Clanwilliam.*)

Edward Lord Skelmersdale.

William Draper Mortimer Lord Wynford.

William Henry Lord Kilmarnock. (*Earl of Erroll.*)

Arthur James Lord Fingall. (*Earl of Fingall.*)

William Philip Lord Sefton. (*Earl of Sefton.*)

Robert Bermingham Lord Clements. (*Earl of Leitrim.*)

Thomas Lord Kenlis. (*Marquess of Headfort.*)

William Lord Chaworth. (*Earl of Meath.*)

Charles Adolphus Lord Dunmore. (*Earl of Dunmore.*)

Augustus Frederick George Warwick Lord Poltimore.

Edward Mostyn Lord Mostyn.

Henry Spencer Lord Templemore.

Valentine Frederick Lord Cloncurry.

John St. Vincent Lord De Saumarez.

Lucius Bentinck Lord Hunsdon. (*Viscount Falkland.*)

Thomas Lord Denman.

William Frederick Lord Abinger.

Philip Lord De L'Isle and Dudley.

Alexander Hugh Lord Ashburton.

Edward Richard Lord Hatherton.

George Henry Charles Lord Strafford.

Archibald Brabazon Sparrow Lord Worlingham. (*Earl of Gosford.*)

William Frederick Lord Stratheden.

Geoffrey Dominick Augustus Frederick Lord Oranmore and Browne. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

Simon Lord Lovat.

William Bateman Lord Bateman.

James Molyneux Lord Charlemont. (*Earl of Charlemont.*)

Francis Alexander Lord Kintore. (*Earl of Kintore.*)

George Ponsonby Lord Lismore. (*Viscount Lismore.*)

Derrick Warner William Lord Rossmore.

Robert Shapland Lord Carew.

Charles Frederick Ashley Cooper Lord De Mauley.

Arthur Lord Wrottesley.

Charles Douglas Richard Lord Sudeley.

Frederick Henry Paul Lord Methuen.

Henry Edward John Lord Stanley of Alderley.

William Henry Lord Leigh.

Beilby Richard Lord Wenlock.

Charles Lord Lurgan.

Thomas Spring Lord Monteagle of Brandon.

James Lord Seaton.

Edward Arthur Wellington Lord Keane.

John Lord Oxenfoord. (*Earl of Stair.*)

Charles Crespigny Lord Vivian.

John Lord Congleton.

Denis St. George Lord Dunsandle and Clanconal. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

Victor Alexander Lord Elgin. (*Earl of Elgin and Kincardine.*)
William Henry Forester Lord Londesborough.
Samuel Jones Lord Overstone.
Charles Robert Claude Lord Truro.
Arthur Lord De Freyne.
Edward Burtenshaw Lord Saint Leonards.
Richard Henry Fitz-Roy Lord Raglan.
Gilbert Henry Lord Aveland.
Valentine Augustus Lord Kenmare. (*Earl of Kenmare.*)
Richard Bickerton Pemell Lord Lyons.
Edward Lord Belper.
James Lord Talbot de Malahide.
Robert Lord Ebury.
Alexander William George Lord Skene. (*Earl Fife.*)
William George Lord Chesham.
Frederic Augustus Lord Chelmsford.
John Lord Churston.
John Charles Lord Strathspey. (*Earl of Seafield.*)
Henry Lord Leconfield.
William Tatton Lord Egerton.
Godfrey Charles Lord Tredegar.
Fitz Patrick Henry Lord Lyveden.
William Lord Brougham and Vaux.
Arthur Fitz-Gerald Lord Kinnaird.
Richard Luttrell Pilkington Lord Westbury.
Francis William Fitzhardinge Lord Fitzhardinge.
Luke George Lord Annaly.
Richard Monckton Lord Houghton.
William Lord Romilly.
James Lord Barrogill. (*Earl of Caithness.*)
Thomas Lord Clermont.
James Herbert Gustavus Meredyth Lord Meredyth. (*Lord Athlumney.*)
Windham Thomas Lord Kenry. (*Earl of Dunraven and Mount-Earl.*)
Charles Stanley Lord Monck. (*Viscount Monck.*)
John Major Lord Hartismere. (*Lord Henniker.*)
Edward Robert Lytton Lord Lytton.
Hedworth Hylton Lord Hylton.
Hugh Henry Lord Strathnairn.
Edward Gordon Lord Penrhyn.
Gustavus Russell Lord Brancepeth. (*Viscount Boyne.*)
John Henry Lord Kesteven.
John Lord Ormathwaite.
William Lord O'Neill.
Robert Cornelis Lord Napier.
Jenico William Joseph Lord Gormanston. (*Viscount Gormanston.*)
William Page Lord Hatherley.
John Hamilton Lord Lawrence.
James Plaisted Lord Penzance.
John Lord Dunning. (*Lord Rollo.*)
James Lord Balinhard. (*Earl of Southesk.*)
William Lord Hare. (*Earl of Listowel.*)
Edward George Lord Howard of Glossop.
John Lord Castletown.
John Emerich Edward Lord Acton.
Thomas James Lord Robartes.
George Grenfell Lord Wolverton.
Fulke Southwell Lord Greville.
Thomas Lord O'Hagan.
William Lord Sandhurst.
Frederic Lord Blachford.
Francis Lord Ettrick. (*Lord Napier.*)
John Lord Hanmer.
Roundell Lord Selborne.
Gavin Lord Breadalbane. (*Earl of Breadalbane.*)
James Charles Herbert Welbore Ellis Lord Somerton. (*Earl of Normanton.*)
Robert Alexander Shafto Lord Waveney.
Henry Austin Lord Aberdare.
Edward Granville George Lord Lanerton.
James Lord Moncreiff.
John Duke Lord Coleridge.
William Lord Emly.
Chichester Samuel Lord Carlingford.
Thomas Francis Lord Cottesloe.
Edmund Lord Hammond.
John Somerset Lord Hampton.
John Lord Winmarleigh.
Cospatrick Alexander Lord Douglas. (*Earl of Home.*)
George Lord Ramsay. (*Earl of Dalhousie.*)
Arthur Edward Holland Grey Lord Grey de Radcliffe.
John Lord Fermanagh. (*In another Place as Earl of Erne.*)
William Richard Lord Harlech.
Henry Gerard Lord Alington.
John Lord Tollemache.
Robert Tolver Lord Gerard.
Mortimer Lord Sackville.
Colin Lord Blackburn. (*A Lord of Appeal in Ordinary.*)
Richard Lord Airey.
Charles Bowyer Lord Norton.

LIST OF THE COMMONS.

THE NAMES OF MEMBERS

Returned to serve in the Twenty-first Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, summoned to meet at Westminster the Fifth Day of March, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventy-four, as by the several Returns filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery appears: amended to the Opening of the Seventh Session on the 5th Day of February, 1880.

BEDFORD COUNTY.

Sir Richard Thomas Gilpin, bt.
Marquess of Tavistock.

BEDFORD.

Samuel Whitbread,
Frederick Charles Polhill-Turner.

BERKS COUNTY.

Robert Loyd-Lindsay,
John Walter,
Philip Wroughton.

READING.

George John Shaw Lefevre,
George Palmer.

WINDSOR (NEW).

Robert Richardson Gardner.

WALLINGFORD.

Edward Wells.

ABINGDON.

John Creemer Clarke.

BUCKINGHAM COUNTY.

Sir Robert Bateson Harvey, bt.,
Nathaniel Grace Lambert,
Hon. Thomas Francis Fremantle.

AYLESBURY.

Sir Nathaniel Mayer de Rothschild, bt.,
Samuel George Smith.

BUCKINGHAM.

Egerton J. Hubbard.

MARLOW (GREAT).

Thomas Owen Wethered.

WYCOMBE (CHEPPING).

Hon. William Henry Peregrine Carington.

CAMBRIDGE COUNTY.

Rt. hon. Henry Bouverie William Brand,
Benjamin Bridges Hunter Rodwell,
Edward Hicks.

CAMBRIDGE (UNIVERSITY).

Rt. hon. Spencer Horatio Walpole,
Alexander James Beresford Beresford-Hope.

CAMBRIDGE.

Alfred George Marten,
Patrick Boyle Smollett.

EAST CHESHIRE.

William John Legh,
William Cunliffe Brooks.

MID CHESHIRE.

Hon. Wilbraham Egerton,
Piers Egerton Warburton.

WEST CHESHIRE.

Sir Philip de Malpas Grey Egerton, bt.,
Hon. Wilbraham Frederick Tollemache.

MACCLESFIELD.

William Coare Brocklehurst,
David Chadwick.

STOCKPORT.

Charles Henry Hopwood,
Frederick Pennington.

BIRKENHEAD.

David Mac Iver.

CHESTER.

Henry Cecil Raikes,
Rt. hon. John George Dodson.

CORNWALL COUNTY.

(Eastern Division.)

Sir Colman Rashleigh, bt.,
John Tremayne.

(Western Division.)

Sir John Saint Aubyn, bt.,
Arthur Pendarves Vivian.

TRURO.

Sir James M'Garel-Hogg, bt.,
Arthur Tremayne.

PENRYN AND FALMOUTH.

David James Jenkins,
Henry Thomas Cole.

BODMIN.

Hon. Edward Frederic Leveson-Gower.

LAUNCESTON.

Sir Hardinge Stanley Giffard, knt.

LISKEARD.

Leonard Henry Courtney.

HELSTON.

Adolphus William Young.

ST. IVES.

Charles Tyringham Praed.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY.

(Eastern Division.)

Edward Stafford Howard,
George James Howard.

(Western Division.)

Hon. Percy Scawen Wyndham,
Rt. Hon. Jocelyn Francis Lord Muncaster.

CARLISLE.
Robert Ferguson,
Sir Wilfrid Lawson, bt.

COCKERMOUTH.
William Fletcher.

WHITEHAVEN.
Rt. hon. George Augustus Frederick Cavendish Bentinck.

DERBY COUNTY.

(North Derbyshire.)
Lord George Henry Cavendish,
Augustus Peter Arkwright.

(South Derbyshire.)
Sir Henry Wilmot, bt.,
Thomas William Evans.

(East Derbyshire.)
Hon. Francis Egerton,
Francis Arkwright.

DERBY.
Michael Thomas Bass,
Samuel Plimsoll.

DEVON COUNTY.

(North Devonshire.)
Rt. hon. Sir Stafford Henry Northcote, bt.,
Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, bt.

(East Devonshire.)
Sir Lawrence Palk, bt.,
Sir John Henry Kennaway, bt.

(South Devonshire.)
Sir Lopes Massey Lopes, bt.,
John Carpenter Garnier.

TIVERTON.
Sir John Heathcoat Amory, bt.
Rt. hon. William Nathaniel Massey.

PLYMOUTH.
Edward Bates,
Sampson Samuel Lloyd.

BARNSTAPLE.
Thomas Cave,

DEVONPORT.
John Henry Puleston,
George Edward Price.

TAVISTOCK.
Lord Arthur John Edward Russell.

EXETER.
Arthur Mills,
John George Johnson.

DORSET COUNTY.

John Floyer,
Hon. William Henry Berkeley Portman,
Hon. Edward Trafalgar Digby.

WEYMOUTH AND MELCOMBE REGIS.
Henry Edwards,
Sir Frederick John William Johnstone, bt.

DORCHESTER.
William Ernest Brymer.

BRIDPORT.
Pandeli Ralli.

SHAFTESBURY.
Vere Fane Benett-Stanford.

WAREHAM.
John Samuel Wanley Sawbridge Erle-Drax.

POOLE.
Hon. Anthony Evelyn Melbourne Ashley.

DURHAM COUNTY.

(Northern Division.)
Charles Mark Palmer,
Sir George Elliot, bt.

(Southern Division.)
Joseph Whitwell Pease,
Frederick Edward Blackett Beaumont.

DURHAM (CITY).
Farrer Herschell,
Sir Arthur Edward Middleton, bt.

SUNDERLAND.
Edward Temperley Gourley,
Sir Henry Marshman Havelock, bt.

GATESHEAD.
Walter Henry James.

SHIELDS (SOUTH).
James Cochran Stevenson.

DARLINGTON.
Edmund Backhouse.

HARTLEPOOL.
Isaac Lowthian Bell.

STOCKTON.
Joseph Dodds.

ESSEX COUNTY.

(West Essex.)
Sir Henry John Selwin Ibbetson, bt.,
Lord Eustace Henry Brownlow Gascoyne Cecil.

ESSEX COUNTY—*cont.*

(East Essex.)
James Round,
Samuel Brise Ruggles-Brise.

(South Essex.)
Thomas Charles Baring,
William Thomas Makins.

COLCHESTER.
Alexander Learmonth,
Herbert Bulkeley Praed.

MALDON.
George Courtauld.

HARWICH.
Henry Jervis White Jervis.

GLOUCESTER COUNTY.

(Eastern Division.)
Rt. hon. Sir Michael Edward Hicks-Beach, bt.
John Reginald Yorke.

(Western Division.)
Hon. Randall Edward Sherborne Plunkett,
Robert Nigel Fitzhardinge Kingscote.

STROUD.
Alfred John Stanton.
Samuel Stephens Marling.

TEWKESBURY.
William Edwin Price.

CIRENCESTER.
Thomas William Chester Master.

CHELTENHAM.
James Tynte Agg-Gardner.

GLOUCESTER.
William Killigrew Wait,
Charles James Monk.

HEREFORD COUNTY.

Sir Joseph Russell Bailey, bt.,
Michael Biddulph,
Daniel Peploe Peploe.

HEREFORD.
George Clive,
George Arbuthnot.

LEOMINSTER.
Thomas Blake.

HERTFORD COUNTY.

Thomas Frederick Halsey,
Abel Smith,
Hon. Henry Frederick Cowper.

HERTFORD.

Arthur James Balfour.

HUNTINGDON COUNTY.

Edward Fellowes,
Viscount Mandeville.

HUNTINGDON.

Viscount Hinchingbrook.

KENT COUNTY.

(Eastern Division.)

Edward Leigh Pemberton,
William Deedes.

(West Kent.)

Sir Charles Henry Mills, bt.,
Viscount Lewisham.

(Mid Kent.)

Hon. William Archer (Amherst) Viscount Holmesdale,
Sir William Hart Dyke, bt.

ROCHESTER.

Sir Julian Goldsmid, bt.,
Arthur John Otway.

MAIDSTONE.

Sir John Lubbock, bt.,
Sir Sydney Hedley Waterlow, bt.

GREENWICH.

Thomas William Boord,
Rt. hon. William Ewart Gladstone.

CHATHAM.

John Eldon Gorst.

GRAVESEND.

Bedford Clapperton Trevelyan Pim.

CANTERBURY.

Hon. Alfred Erskine Gathorne-Hardy
Robert Peter Laurie.

LANCASTER COUNTY.

(North Lancashire.)

Rt. Hon. Frederick Arthur Stanley,
Thomas Henry Clifton.

(North-east Lancashire.)

James Maden Holt,
John Pierce Chamberlain Starkie.

Lancaster County—*cont.*

(South-east Lancashire.)

Hon. Algernon Fulke Egerton,
Edward Hardcastle.

(South-west Lancashire.)

Rt. hon. Richard Assheton Cross,
John Ireland Blackburne.

LIVERPOOL.

Right hon. Dudley Francis Stuart (Ryder) Viscount Sandon,
William Rathbone,
Edward Whitley.

MANCHESTER.

Hugh Birley,
Sir Thomas Bazley, bt.,
Jacob Bright.

PRESTON.

Edward Hermon,
Sir John Holker, knt.

WIGAN.

Hon. Lord Lindsay,
Thomas Knowles.

BOLTON.

John Hick,
John Kynaston Cross.

BLACKBURN.

William Edward Briggs.
Daniel Thwaites.

OLDHAM.

Frederick Lowten Spinks,
John Tomlinson Hibbert.

SALFORD.

William Thomas Charley,
Oliver Ormerod Walker.

CLITHEROE.

Ralph Assheton.

ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE.

Thomas Walton Mellor.

BURY.

Robert Needham Philips.

ROCHDALE.

Thomas Bayley Potter.

WARRINGTON.

Sir Gilbert Greenall, bt.

BURNLEY.

Peter Rylands.

STALEYBRIDGE.

Tom Harrop Sidebottom.

LEICESTER COUNTY.

(Northern Division.)

Rt. hon. Lord John James Robert Manners,
Samuel William Clowes.

(Southern Division.)

Albert Pell,
William Unwin Heygate.

LEICESTER.

Peter Alfred Taylor,
Alexander M'Arthur.

LINCOLN COUNTY.

(North Lincolnshire.)

Sir John Dugdale Astley, bt.,
Rowland Winn.

(Mid Lincolnshire.)

Henry Chaplin,
Hon. Edward Stanhope.

(South Lincolnshire.)

Sir William Earle Welby-Gregory, bt.,
Edmund Turnor.

GRANTHAM.

Sir Hugh Arthur Henry Cholmeley, bt.,
Henry Francis Cockayne Cust.

BOSTON.

William James Ingram,
Thomas Garfit.

STAMFORD.

Rt. hon. Sir John Charles Dalrymple Hay, bt.

GRIMSBY (GREAT).

Alfred Mellor Watkin.

LINCOLN.

Edward Chaplin,
Charles Seely.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY.

Rt. Hon. Lord George Francis Hamilton,
Octavius Edward Coope.

WESTMINSTER.

Rt. hon. William Henry Smith,
Sir Charles Russell, bt.

TOWER HAMLETS.

Charles Thompson Ritchie,
Joseph D'Aguilar Samuda.

HACKNEY.

John Holms,
Henry Fawcett.

FINSBURY.

William Torrens M'Cullagh Torrens,
Sir Andrew Lusk, bt.

MARYLEBONE.

William Forsyth,
Sir Thomas Chambers, knt.

CHELSEA.

Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, bt.,
William Gordon.

LONDON (UNIVERSITY).
Rt. hon. Robert Lowe.

LONDON.
William James Richmond Cotton,
Philip Twells,
Rt. hon. John Gellibrand Hubbard,
Rt. hon. George Joachim Goschen.

MONMOUTH COUNTY.
Rt. Hon. Lord Henry Richard Charles Somerset,
Hon. Frederick Courtenay Morgan.

MONMOUTH.
Thomas Cordes.

NORFOLK COUNTY.
(West Norfolk.)
Sir William Bagge, bt.,
George William Pierrepont Bentinck.

(North Norfolk.)
Sir Edmund Henry Knowles Lacon, bt.,
Edward Birkbeck.

(South Norfolk.)
Clare Sewell Read,
Sir Robert Jacob Buxton, bt.

LYNN REGIS.
Hon. Robert Bourke,
Lord Claud John Hamilton.

NORWICH.
Jeremiah James Colman,

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY.
(Northern Division.)
Sackville George Stopford-Sackville,
Hon. Lord Burghley.

(Southern Division.)
Sir Rainald Knightley, bt.,
Fairfax William Cartwright.

PETERBOROUGH.
Thomson Hankey,
Hon. William John Wentworth Fitzwilliam.

NORTHAMPTON.
Pickering Phipps,
Charles George Merewether.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY.
(Northern Division.)
Rt. hon. Henry George (Percy) Earl Percy,
Sir Matthew White Ridley, bt.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY —*cont.*

(Southern Division.)
Wentworth Blackett Beaumont,
Edward Ridley.

MORPETH.
Thomas Burt.

TYNEMOUTH.
Thomas Eustace Smith.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.
Joseph Cowen,
Charles Frederick Hamond.

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED.
Sir Dudley Coutts Marjoribanks, bt.,
David Milne Home.

NOTTINGHAM COUNTY.
(Northern Division.)
Frederick Chatfield Smith,
Viscount Galway.

(Southern Division).
Thomas Blackborne Thoroton Hildyard,
George Storer.

NEWARK-UPON-TRENT.
Thomas Earp,
Samuel Boteler Bristowe.

RETFORD (EAST).
Francis John Savile Foljambe,
William Beckett Denison.

NOTTINGHAM.
William Evelyn Denison,
Saul Isaac.

OXFORD COUNTY.
John Sidney North,
William Cornwallis Cartwright,
Edward William Harcourt.

OXFORD (UNIVERSITY).
Rt. hon. John Robert Mowbray,
John Gilbert Talbot.

OXFORD (CITY).
Sir William George Granville Venables Vernon-Harcourt, knt.,
Alexander William Hall.

WOODSTOCK.
Lord Randolph Henry Spencer Churchill.

BANBURY.
Bernhard Samuelson.

RUTLAND COUNTY.
Rt. hon. Gerard James Noel,
George Henry Finch.

SALOP COUNTY.
(Northern Division.)
Hon. George Cecil Orlando (Bridgeman) Viscount Newport,
Stanley Leighton.

(Southern Division.)
John Edmund Severne,
Sir Baldwyn Leighton, bt.

SHREWSBURY.
Charles Cecil Cotes,
Henry Robertson.

WENLOCK.
Alexander Hargreaves Brown,
Cecil Theodore Weld Forester.

LUDLOW.
Hon. George Herbert Windsor Windsor-Clive.

BRIDGNORTH.
William Henry Foster.

SOMERSET COUNTY.
(East Somerset.)
Sir Philip John William Miles, bt.
Lord Brooke.

(Mid Somerset.)
Richard Horner Paget,
William Stephen Gore-Langton

(West Somerset.)
Hon. Arthur Wellington Alexander Nelson Hood,
Vaughan Hanning Vaughan-Lee.

BATH.
Sir Arthur Divett Hayter, bt.
Nathaniel George Philips Bousfield.

TAUNTON.
Alexander Charles Barclay,
Sir Henry James, knt.

FROME.
Henry Bernhard Samuelson.

BRISTOL.
Samuel Morley,
Lewis Fry.

SOUTHAMPTON COUNTY.

(*Northern Division.*)

Rt. hon. George Sclater-Booth,
William Wither Bramston Beach.

(*Southern Division.*)

Lord Henry John Montagu-Douglas-Scott,
Rt. hon. William Francis Cowper-Temple.

WINCHESTER.

William Barrow Simonds,
Arthur Robert Naghten.

PORTSMOUTH.

Sir James Dalrymple Horn Elphinstone, bt.,
Hon. Thomas Charles Bruce,

LYMINGTON.

Edmund Hegan Kennard.

ANDOVER.

Henry Wellesley.

CHRISTCHURCH.

Sir Henry Drummond Wolff.

PETERSFIELD.

Hon. Sydney Hylton Jolliffe.

SOUTHAMPTON.

Sir Frederick Perkins, knt.,
Alfred Giles

STAFFORD COUNTY.

(*North Staffordshire.*)

Colin Minton Campbell,
Robert William Hanbury.

(*West Staffordshire.*)

Alexander Staveley Hill,
Francis Monckton.

(*East Staffordshire.*)

Samuel Charles Allsopp,
Michael Arthur Bass.

STAFFORD.

Thomas Salt,
Alexander Macdonald.

TAMWORTH.

Rt. hon. Sir Robert Peel, bt.,
Hamar Alfred Bass.

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME.

William Shepherd Allen,
Samuel Rathbone Edge.

WOLVERHAMPTON.

Rt. hon. Charles Pelham Villiers,
Thomas Matthias Weguelin.

STOKE-UPON-TRENT.

Robert Heath,
Edward Vaughan Kenealy.

WALSALL.

Sir Charles Forster, bt.

WEDNESBURY.

Alexander Brogden.

LICHFIELD.

Richard Dyott.

SUFFOLK COUNTY.

(*Eastern Division.*)

Frederick Brook (Thellusson) Lord Rendlesham,
Frederick St. John Newdegate Barne.

(*Western Division.*)

Windsor Parker,
Thomas Thornhill.

IPSWICH.

Thomas Clement Cobbold,
James Redfoord Bulwer.

BURY ST. EDMUNDS.

Edward Greene,
Lord Francis Hervey.

EYE.

Rt. hon. George William Viscount Barrington.

SURREY COUNTY.

(*East Surrey.*)

James Watney,
William Grantham.

(*Mid Surrey.*)

Sir Henry William Peek, bt.
Sir James John Trevor Lawrence, bt.

(*West Surrey.*)

George Cubitt,
Lee Steere.

SOUTHWARK.

Francis Marcus Beresford.

LAMBETH.

Sir James Clarke Lawrence, bt.
William McArthur.

GUILDFORD.

Denzil Roberts Onslow.

SUSSEX COUNTY.

(*Eastern Division.*)

George Burrow Gregory,
Montagu David Scott.

(*Western Division.*)

Sir Walter Barttelot Barttelot, bt.,
Hon. Charles Henry (Gordon Lennox) Earl of March.

SHOREHAM (NEW).

Rt. hon. Stephen Cave,
Sir Walter Wm. Burrell, bt.

BRIGHTHELMSTONE.

James Lloyd Ashbury,
Charles Cameron Shute.

CHICHESTER.

Rt. hon. Lord Henry George Charles Gordon Lennox.

LEWES.

William Langham Christie.

HORSHAM.

James Clifton Brown.

MIDHURST.

Sir Henry Thurston Holland, bt.

WARWICK COUNTY.

(*Northern Division.*)

Charles Newdigate Newdegate,
William Bromley Davenport.

(*Southern Division.*)

Rt. hon. Hugh (de Grey Seymour) Earl of Yarmouth.
Sir John Eardley Eardley Wilmot, bt.

BIRMINGHAM.

Philip Henry Muntz,
Rt. hon. John Bright,
Joseph Chamberlain.

WARWICK.

George William John Repton,
Arthur Wellesley Peel.

COVENTRY.

Henry William Eaton,
Sir Henry Mather Jackson, bt.

WESTMORELAND COUNTY.

Hon. Thomas (Taylour) Earl of Bective,
Hon. William Lowther.

KENDAL.

John Whitwell.

(WIGHT) ISLE OF.

Alexander Dundas Wishart Ross Baillie Cochrane.

NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT.

Charles Cavendish Clifford.

WILTS COUNTY.

(*Northern Division.*)

George Sotheron Estcourt,
Sir George Samuel Jenkinson, bt.

(*Southern Division.*)

Rt. hon. Lord Henry Frederick Thynne,
Hon. (William Pleydell Bouverie) Viscount Folkestone.

NEW SARUM (SALISBURY).

Granville Richard Ryder,
John Alfred Lush.

CRICKLADE.

Sir Daniel Gooch, bt.,
Ambrose Lethbridge Goddard.

DEVIZES.
Sir Thomas Bateson, bt.

MARLBOROUGH.
Lord Charles William Bruce.

CHIPPENHAM.
Gabriel Goldney.

CALNE.
Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice.

MALMESBURY.
Walter Powell.

WESTBURY.
Abraham Laverton.

WILTON.
Hon. Sidney Herbert.

WORCESTER COUNTY.
(Eastern Division.)
Henry Allsopp,
Thomas Eades Walker.

(Western Division.)
Frederick Winn Knight,
Sir Edmund Anthoney Harley Lechmere, bt.

EVESHAM.
James Bourne.

DROITWICH.
John Corbett.

BEWDLEY.
Charles Harrison.

DUDLEY.
Henry Brinsley Sheridan.

KIDDERMINSTER.
Sir William Augustus Fraser, bt.

WORCESTER.
Thomas Rowley Hill,
John Derby Allcroft.

YORK COUNTY.
(North Riding.)
Rt. hon. William Reginald (Duncombe) Viscount Helmsley,
Frederick Acclom Milbank.

(East Riding.)
Christopher Sykes,
William Henry Harrison Broadley.

(West Riding, Northern Division.)
Lord Frederick Charles Cavendish,
Sir Matthew Wilson, bt.

(West Riding, Eastern Division.)
Christopher Beckett Denison,
Joshua Fielden.

(West Riding, Southern Division.)
Walter Thomas William Spencer Stanhope,
Lewis Randal Starkey.

YORK COUNTY—*cont.*

LEEDS.
William St. James Wheelhouse,
Robert Tennant,
John Barran.

PONTEFRACT.
Rt. hon. Hugh Culling Eardley Childers,
Samuel Waterhouse.

SCARBOROUGH.
Sir Charles Legard, bt.,
Sir Harcourt Vanden Bempde Johnstone, bt.

SHEFFIELD.
Anthony John Mundella.
Samuel Danks Waddy.

BRADFORD.
Rt. hon. William Edward Forster,
Henry William Ripley.

HALIFAX.
Rt. hon. James Stansfeld,
John Dyson Hutchinson.

KNARESBOROUGH.
Basil Thomas Woodd.

MALTON.
Hon. Charles William Wentworth-Fitzwilliam.

RICHMOND.
Hon. John Charles Dundas.

RIPON.
Rt. hon. Frederick Oliver (Robinson) Earl de Grey.

HUDDERSFIELD.
Edward Aldam Leatham.

THIRSK.
Sir William Payne Gallwey, bt.

NORTHALLERTON.
George William Elliot.

WAKEFIELD.
Thomas Kemp Sanderson.

WHITBY.
William Henry Gladstone.

YORK CITY.
George Leeman,
Rt. hon. James Lowther.

MIDDLESBOROUGH.
Isaac Wilson.

DEWSBURY.
John Simon.

KINGSTON-UPON-HULL.
Charles Henry Wilson,
Charles Morgan Norwood.

BARONS OF THE CINQUE PORTS.

DOVER.
Charles Kaye Freshfield,
Alexander George Dickson.

BARONS OF THE CINQUE PORTS—*cont.*

HASTINGS.
Thomas Brassey,
Sir Ughtred James Kay-Shuttleworth, bt.

SANDWICH.
Henry Arthur Brassey,
Rt. hon. Edward Hugessen Knatchbull-Hugessen.

HYTHE.
Sir Edward William Watkin.

RYE.
Hon. John Stewart Gathorne-Hardy.

WALES.

ANGLESEA COUNTY.
Richard Davies.

BEAUMARIS.
Morgan Lloyd.

BRECKNOCK COUNTY.
William Fuller Maitland.

BRECKNOCK.
James Price William Gwynne Holford.

CARDIGAN COUNTY.
Thomas Edward Lloyd.

CARDIGAN, &c.
David Davies.

CARMARTHEN COUNTY.
Hon. (Frederick Archibald Vaughan Campbell) Viscount Emlyn,
John Jones.

CARMARTHEN, &c.
Benjamin Thomas Williams.

CARNARVON COUNTY.
Hon. George Sholto Douglas Pennant.

CARNARVON, &c.
William Bulkeley Hughes.

DENBIGH COUNTY.
Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, bt.,
George Osborne Morgan.

DENBIGH, &c.
Watkin Williams.

FLINT COUNTY.
Hon. Lord Richard de Aquila Grosvenor.

FLINT, &c.
John Roberts.

GLAMORGAN COUNTY.
Henry Hussey Vivian,
Christopher Rice Mansel Talbot.

GLAMORGAN COUNTY—*cont.*

MERTHYR TYDVIL.

Henry Richard,
Richard Fothergill.

CARDIFF, &c.

James Frederick Dudley Crichton-Stuart.

SWANSEA, &c.

Lewis Llewelyn Dillwyn.

MERIONETH COUNTY.

Samuel Holland.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY.

Charles Watkin Williams Wynn.

MONTGOMERY, &c.

Hon. Frederick Stephen Archibald Hanbury-Tracy.

PEMBROKE COUNTY.

James Bevan Bowen.

PEMBROKE, &c.

Edward James Reed, C.B.

HAVERFORDWEST.

Hon. William Baron Kensington.

RADNOR COUNTY.

Hon. Arthur Walsh.

NEW RADNOR.

Rt. hon. Spencer Compton (Cavendish) Marquess of Hartington.

SCOTLAND.

ABERDEENSHIRE.

(*East Aberdeenshire.*)

Sir Alexander Hamilton Gordon, knt.

(*West Aberdeenshire.*)

Lord William Douglas Cope Gordon.

ABERDEEN.

John Farley Leith.

ARGYLE.

Lord Colin Campbell.

AYR.

(*North Ayrshire.*)

Roger Montgomerie.

(*South Ayrshire.*)

Claud Alexander.

KILMARNOCK, RENFREW, &c.

James Fortescue Harrison.

BURGHS OF AYR, &c.

Sir William James Montgomery Cuninghame, bt.

BANFF.

Robert William Duff.

BERWICK.

Hon. Rbt. Baillie-Hamilton

BUTE.

Charles Dalrymple.

CAITHNESSSHIRE.

Sir John George Tollemache Sinclair, bt.

WICK, KIRKWALL, &c.

John Pender.

CLACKMANNAN AND KINROSS.

Rt. hon. William Patrick Adam.

DUMBARTON.

Archibald Orr Ewing.

DUMFRIESSHIRE.

John James Hope-Johnstone.

DUMFRIES, &c.

Ernest Noel.

EDINBURGHSHIRE.

Rt. hon. William Henry (Montagu Douglas Scott) Earl of Dalkeith.

EDINBURGH.

Duncan McLaren,
James Cowan.

UNIVERSITIES OF EDINBURGH AND ST. ANDREWS.

Rt. hon. Lyon Playfair.

BURGHS OF LEITH, &c.

Andrew Grant.

ELGIN AND NAIRN.

Sir George Macpherson Grant, bt.

BURGHS OF ELGIN, &c.

Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant Duff.

FALKIRK, &c. BURGHS.

John Ramsay.

FIFE.

Sir Robert Anstruther, bt.

BURGHS OF ST. ANDREWS.

Edward Ellice.

KIRKCALDY, DYSART, &c.

Sir George Campbell, knt.

FORFAR.

James William Barclay.

TOWN OF DUNDEE.

James Yeaman,
Edward Jenkins.

MONTROSE, &c.

Rt. hon. William Edward Baxter.

HADDINGTON.

Hon. Francis Wemyss (Charteris) Lord Elcho.

HADDINGTON BURGHS.

Sir David Wedderburn, bt.

INVERNESS.

Donald Cameron.

INVERNESS, &c.

Charles Fraser Mackintosh.

KINCARDINESHIRE.

Sir George Balfour, K.C.B.

KIRKCUDBRIGHT.

John Maitland.

LANARK.

(*North Lanarkshire.*)

Sir Thomas Edward Colebrooke, bt.

(*South Lanarkshire.*)

Sir Windham Charles James Carmichael-Anstruther, bt.

GLASGOW.

Charles Cameron,
George Anderson,
Charles Tennant.

UNIVERSITIES OF GLASGOW AND ABERDEEN.

Rt. hon. William Watson.

LINLITHGOW.

Peter McLagan.

ORKNEY AND SHETLAND.

Samuel Laing.

PEEBLES AND SELKIRK.

Sir Graham Graham Montgomery, bt.

PERTH.

Henry Edward Stirling Home Drummond Moray.

TOWN OF PERTH.

Charles Stuart Parker.

RENFREWSHIRE.

William Mure.

PAISLEY.

William Holms.

GREENOCK.

James Stewart.

ROSS AND CROMARTY.

Alexander Matheson.

ROXBURGH.

Sir George Henry Scott Douglas, bt.

HAWICK, SELKIRK, &c.

George Otto Trevelyan.

STIRLING.

Sir William Edmonstone, bt.

STIRLING, &c.

Henry Campbell-Bannerman.

SUTHERLAND.

Hon. (Cromartie Leveson Gower) Marquess of Stafford.

WIGTON.

Robert Vans Agnew.

WIGTON, &c. BURGHS.

Mark John Stewart.

IRELAND.

ANTRIM COUNTY.

James Chaine,
Hon. Edward O'Neill.

BELFAST.

James Porter Corry,
William Ewart.

LISBURN.
Sir Richard Wallace, bt.

CARRICKFERGUS.
Marriott Robert Dalway.

ARMAGH COUNTY.
Edward Wingfield Verner,
Maxwell Charles Close.

ARMAGH (CITY).
George De La Poer Beresford.

CARLOW COUNTY.
Henry Bruen,
Arthur MacMorrough Kavanagh.

CARLOW (BOROUGH).
Henry Owen Lewis.

CAVAN COUNTY.
Charles Joseph Fay,
Joseph Gillis Biggar.

CLARE COUNTY.
Rt. hon. Lord Francis Conyngham,
James P. O'Gorman Mahon (The O'Gorman Mahon).

ENNIS.
James Lysaght Finigan.

CORK COUNTY.
William Shaw,
David la Zouche Colthurst.

CORK (CITY).
Nicholas Daniel Murphy,
William Goulding.

BANDON BRIDGE.
Alexander Swanston.

YOUGHAL.
Sir Joseph Neale McKenna, knt.

KINSALE.
Eugene Collins.

MALLOW.
John George MacCarthy.

DONEGAL COUNTY.
Hon. James (Hamilton) Marquess of Hamilton,
Thomas Lea.

DOWN COUNTY.
Hon. Lord Arthur Edwin Hill-Trevor,
Viscount Castlereagh.

NEWRY.
William Whitworth.

DOWNPATRICK.
John Mulholland.

DUBLIN COUNTY.
Ion Trant Hamilton,
Rt. hon. Thomas Edward Taylor.

DUBLIN (CITY).
Sir Arthur Edward Guinness, bt.,
Maurice Brooks.

DUBLIN UNIVERSITY.
Hon. David Rbt. Plunket,
Rt. hon. Edward Gibson.

FERMANAGH.
William Humphrys Archdall,
Hon. Henry Arthur Cole.

ENNISKILLEN.
Hon. John Henry (Crichton) Viscount Crichton.

GALWAY COUNTY.
John Philip Nolan,
Mitchell Henry.

GALWAY (BOROUGH).
George Morris,
Michael Francis Ward.

KERRY.
Henry Arthur Herbert,
Rowland Ponsonby Blennerhassett.

TRALEE.
Daniel O'Donoghue, (The O'Donoghue).

KILDARE.
Charles Henry Meldon,
Rt. hon. William Henry Ford Cogan.

KILKENNY.
George Leopold Bryan,
Patrick Martin.

KILKENNY (CITY).
Benjamin Whitworth.

KING'S COUNTY.
Sir Patrick O'Brien, bt.,
David Sherlock.

LEITRIM COUNTY.
John Brady,
Francis O'Beirne.

LIMERICK COUNTY.
William Henry O'Sullivan,
Edmund John Synan.

LIMERICK (CITY).
Richard O'Shaughnessy,
Daniel FitzGerald Gabbett.

LONDONDERRY COUNTY.
Rt. hon. Hugh Law,
Sir Thomas M'Clure, bt.

COLERAINE.
Daniel Taylor.

LONDONDERRY (CITY).
Charles Edward Lewis.

LONGFORD COUNTY.
George Errington,
Justin McCarthy.

LOUTH COUNTY.
Alexander Martin Sullivan,
George Harley Kirk.

DUNDALK.
Philip Callan.

DROGHEDA.
William Hagarty O'Leary.

MAYO COUNTY.
George Ekins Browne,
John O'Connor Power.

MEATH COUNTY.
Nicholas Ennis,
Charles Stewart Parnell.

MONAGHAN COUNTY.
Sir John Leslie, bt.,
Sewallis Evelyn Shirley.

QUEEN'S COUNTY.
Kenelm Thomas Digby,
Edmund Dease.

PORTARLINGTON.
Lionel Seymour William Dawson-Damer.

ROSCOMMON COUNTY.
Charles Owen O'Conor (The O'Conor Don),
Hon. Charles French.

SLIGO COUNTY.
Denis Maurice O'Conor.
Edward Robert King Harman.

TIPPERARY COUNTY.
Stephen Moore,
Rt. Hon. Edmond Dwyer Gray.

CLONMEL.
Arthur John Moore.

TYRONE COUNTY.
John William Ellison Macartney,
Hon. Henry William Lowry-Corry.

DUNGANNON.
Thomas Alexander Dickson.

WATERFORD COUNTY.
Lord Charles William De la Poer Beresford,
James Delahunty.

DUNGARVAN.
Frank Hugh O'Donnell.

WATERFORD (CITY).
Richard Power,
Purcell O'Gorman.

WESTMEATH COUNTY.
Patrick James Smyth,
Rt. hon. Lord Robert Montagu.

ATHLONE.
Edward Sheil.

WEXFORD COUNTY.
Sir George Bowyer, bt.,
Keyes O'Clery.

WEXFORD (BOROUGH).
William Archer Redmond.

NEW ROSS.
Charles George Tottenham.

WICKLOW COUNTY.
William Richard O'Byrne,
William Wentworth Fitzwilliam Dick.

HANSARD'S

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

IN THE
Seventh Session of the *Twenty-First Parliament* of the
United Kingdom of *Great Britain* and *Ireland*,
appointed to meet 5 March, 1874, and thence continued
till 5 February, 1880, in the Forty-third Year of
the Reign of

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

FIRST VOLUME OF THE SESSION.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 5th February, 1880.

THE PARLIAMENT, which had been Prorogued successively from the 15th day of August, 1879, to the 1st day of November; thence to the 19th day of December; thence to the 5th day of February, 1880, met this day for the Despatch of Business.

The Session of Parliament was opened by The Queen in Person.

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

Her Majesty, being seated on the Throne, adorned with Her Crown and Regal Ornaments, and attended by Her Officers of State, (the Lords being in their robes)—commanded the Yeoman Usher of the Black Rod, through the Deputy Lord Great Chamberlain, to let the Commons know "It is Her Majesty's Pleasure they attend Her immediately, in this House."

Who being come, with their Speaker;

The LORD CHANCELLOR, taking directions from Her Majesty, *delivered* Her Majesty's most gracious Speech to both Houses of Parliament, as follows:—

"*My Lords, and Gentlemen,*

"It is with much satisfaction that I again resort to the advice and assistance of my Parliament.

"My relations with all the Powers continue to be friendly. The course of events since the prorogation of

Parliament has tended to furnish additional security to the maintenance of European peace, on the principles laid down by the Treaty of Berlin. Much, however, still remains to be done to repair the disorder with which the late war has affected many parts of the Turkish Empire.

"A Convention for the suppression of the Slave Trade has been concluded between my Government and that of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan.

"At the close of your last Session I expressed my hope that the Treaty of Gundamak had happily terminated the war in Afghanistan. In conformity with its provisions, my Envoy, with his retinue, was honourably received and entertained by the Ameer at Cabul. While engaged, however, in the exercise of their duty, he and those connected with the Embassy were treacherously attacked by overwhelming numbers, and, after an heroic defence, were almost all massacred. An outrage so intolerable called for condign chastisement, and my troops, which, pursuant to the stipulations of the Treaty, either had withdrawn or were withdrawing from the territories governed by the Ameer, were ordered to retrace their steps. The skill exhibited in the rapid march upon Cabul, and in the advances upon the other lines of action, reflects the highest credit upon the officers and men of my British and native forces, whose bravery has shone with its wonted lustre in every collision with the enemy.

"The abdication of the Ameer and the unsettled condition of the country render the recall of my troops impossible for the present; but the principle on which my Government has hitherto acted remains unchanged, and while determined to make the frontiers of my Indian Empire strong, I desire to be in friendly relations alike with those who may rule in Afghanistan and with the people of that country.

"My anticipations as to the early establishment of peace in South Africa have been fulfilled. The capture and deposition of the Zulu King, and the breaking up of the military organization on which his dynasty was based, have relieved my possessions in that part of the world from a danger which has seriously impeded their advancement and consolidation. In Basutoland, a native outbreak of considerable importance has been effectually quelled by my Colonial forces; while the Transvaal has been freed from the depredations of a powerful Chief, who, having successfully resisted the former government of the country, had persistently rejected our attempts at conciliation. I have reason to hope that the time is now approaching when an important advance may be made towards the establishment of a Union or Confederation under which the powers of self-government, already enjoyed by the inhabitants of the Cape Colony, may be extended to my subjects in other parts of South Africa.

"Papers on these and other matters will be forthwith laid before you.

"*Gentlemen of the House of Commons,*

"I have directed the Estimates of this year to be prepared and presented to you without delay.

"*My Lords, and Gentlemen,*

"The Commission which, at the close of the Session, I informed you I had issued to inquire into the causes of agricultural depression throughout the United Kingdom, is pursuing its labours. In the meantime, the serious deficiency in the usual crops in some parts of Ireland has rendered necessary special precautions on the part of my Government to guard against the calamities with which those districts were threatened.

"With this view, they have called upon the authorities charged with the duty of administering relief to make ample preparations for the distribution of food and fuel, should such a step become necessary, and they have also stimulated the employment of labour by advances on terms more liberal than those prescribed by the existing law.

"I feel assured that you will give your sanction to the course which has been adopted where it may have exceeded the power entrusted by Parliament to the Executive Government.

"A proposal will be submitted to you for providing the funds required for these exceptional advances on the security of the property administered by the Church Temporalities Commissioners.

"I trust you will be able to resume the consideration of the Criminal Code, and of the Improvement of the Law of Bankruptcy.

"Bills will be laid before you, for enlarging the powers of owners of Settled Land, for consolidating and amending the Lunacy Laws, and for simplifying the practice of Conveyancing.

"I commend to you these and other measures which may be submitted for your consideration, and I trust that the blessing of the Almighty will attend and direct your labours."

And then Her Majesty retired.

And the Commons withdrew.

ROLL OF THE LORDS—Garter King of Arms attending, delivered at the Table (in the usual manner) a List of the Lords Temporal in the Seventh Session of the Twenty-first Parliament of the United Kingdom: The same was ordered to lie on the Table.

SAT FIRST.

The Duke of Portland, after the death of his cousin.

The Viscount St. Vincent, after the death of his father.

The Lord Chelmsford, after the death of his father.

The Lord Lawrence, after the death of his father.

SELECT VESTRIES.

Bill, pro formâ, read 1^a.

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.

The QUEEN'S SPEECH *reported* by The LORD CHANCELLOR.

THE EARL OF ONSLOW: My Lords, in rising for the first time to take part in the debates of your Lordships' House, I must confess to a feeling of great embarrassment, addressing as I do noble Lords who have had much experience in the debates of this and the other House of Parliament, and in an Assembly which has earned for itself the highest reputation for debating power; but I am encouraged to proceed when I recollect that during the few years I have had the honour of a seat in your Lordships' House, I have observed that great indulgence has been afforded to those noble Lords who have been placed in the position which I now occupy, and I can only express a hope that you will not make any exception in my case. My Lords, before I proceed to discuss the topics which are to be found in the gracious Speech from the Throne, I may, perhaps, be allowed to congratulate your Lordships on the fact that Her Majesty has been again graciously pleased to open her Parliament in person, and I cannot but think that the lustre which is thus conferred upon our deliberations will be a material benefit to, and be greatly appreciated by, her people. During the preceding Parliament I believe that Her Majesty was only once able to open Parliament in person; but during the existence of the present Parliament there have been three several occasions upon which Her Majesty has honoured us with her presence, thus affording fresh proofs of her ability and desire personally to perform the functions of her exalted station. My Lords, Her Majesty commences by expressing her satisfaction at having again to resort to the advice and assistance of Parliament, and I feel confident that your Lordships will yourselves feel glad that there is no longer any occasion to turn to the newspapers to see that formidable heading "Parliament out of Session," which has given rise to such torrents of eloquence which, in Scotland, culminated in a Niagara. The next point in Her Majesty's Speech contains the gratifying announcement that Her Majesty's relations with all the Powers continue to be friendly. That appears to me to be a matter of unusual congratulation, when we reflect that two years ago he would have been a bold man who would have predicted that Her Majesty's Speech on the present occasion could have contained such an announcement. And, my Lords, I cannot help saying that it is mainly to the spirited conduct of Her Majesty's Government at that time that we are not now deploring a general war in Europe. Her Majesty goes on to say that the course of events since the Prorogation of Parliament has tended to furnish additional security for the maintenance of European peace on the principles laid down in the Treaty of Berlin; and when I remember the statements which have been made as to the enormous armaments of Continental Powers I read this paragraph with considerable satisfaction, because I cannot help looking back to the statements that have been made by the Chancellors of the two Empires of Germany and Austria as to the probability of maintaining the peace of Europe; and I cannot believe that either that Power which stood by us so manfully during the recent crisis, or that Power at whose capital the Treaty of Berlin was made, and whose Chancellor presided at the Congress, will either of them be the first to do anything which would be likely to to endanger the peace of Europe. My Lords, I may allude to the gratifying fact that the Bulgarian Province has elected its Prince, and that the whole of the territory which was occupied by Russian troops has been evacuated, and that during the six months which has just elapsed no disturbance whatever has taken place in that territory, a proof of the continued development of the principles laid down in the Treaty of Berlin. Before leaving this part of the subject, may I be allowed to ask your Lordships, not only as legislators, not only as Members of this or that political Party, but as Englishmen and citizens of the British Empire which extends over one-seventh of the whole world, to join with me in congratulating ourselves that England has once more resumed that position in the Councils of Nations to which she is justly entitled by her wealth, her commercial importance, and the enterprize of her people. My Lords, in a remarkable work which has recently been published, the Autobiography of Prince Metternich, that great diplomatist has reduced the principles of politics and diplomacy to these very simple terms—

> "Each State, besides its separate interests, has also those which are common to it with other States; and history teaches us that whenever the separate comes into conflict with the general interests of the State, and the latter are neglected or mistaken in the zealous and extensive prosecution of the former, this is to be regarded as an exceptional or unhealthy condition, whose development or speedy amendment ultimately decides the destiny of the State—that is, its impending decline or its recuperative prosperity."

My Lords, I do not consider it would be possible, even if it were desirable, to limit the policy of England within the narrow bounds to which some of our politicians would confine it. It has been a matter for congratulation to past generations that this Island is divided from the Continent by a single streak of sea; but I believe that that satisfaction will cease to be an inheritance of posterity, if they are reminded by it that it has been made the limit to those great opportunities which have been afforded to England of being the pioneer of humanity, civilization, and Christianity. Much remains to be done in the Turkish Empire, in consequence of the late war by which she has been ravaged. We cannot but be aware that a great war cripples even the most powerful of nations; and although it must be apparent that up to the present moment Turkey has been unable to make any great movement in the way of reform, I do not think that we can say that no steps have been taken for the amelioration of the condition of her population, when we see that certain judicial reforms are to be proposed, which are thus communicated to the Ambassadors at Constantinople by the Turkish Minister—

> "We can easily understand that the judicial system was faulty at the foundation, and that no amelioration whatever in Ottoman society could be hoped for, except by a radical reform of our judicial *régime.*"

And he afterwards adds—

> "To enter immediately after its disasters as courageously as it has done on the path marked out by the modern law was an act of which the significance and the consequences deserve to be highly appreciated. Unfortunately, the vicious condition amid which Ottoman society contends with an energy worthy of the sympathy of the civilized world prolongs a state of things but little suitable for the putting an end to abuses which long custom has resulted in causing to be viewed as if inscribed in the internal and international law of the Empire."

Here, at any rate, we have that which must precede any reform—an admission that the existing state of affairs is utterly bad. That Her Majesty's Government have not been unmindful of Turkey I think is shown by the paragraph in which She has congratulated her Parliament that a Convention has been made with the Sultan for the suppression of the Slave Trade, which no doubt will, with other Papers, be shortly laid upon the Table of the House. I must now refer for a moment to matters in India; and, in the first place, I will call your attention to the Treaty of Gundamak, because it is on the basis of that Treaty that the policy of Her Majesty's Government is founded. It contains two important provisions. The first is that which relates to the dealings of the Ameer of Cabul with foreign States, which were to be in accordance with the views of the British Government; and the second relates to the Khyber Pass and the district that is to remain permanently under our protection, and the other districts which have been assigned to us temporarily and are not to remain permanently in our hands. From the opportunity which our Envoy had of judging of his character, I think we were perfectly justified in treating Yakoob Khan as a Prince capable of governing Afghanistan. Yakoob Khan was the son of Shere Ali. When Shere Ali left his capital, Yakoob Khan was nominated by him as his successor. My Lords, our Envoy, Sir Louis Cavagnari, had ample opportunities of judging of the disposition of Yakoob Khan. He tells us that he believed him to be sufficiently clear-sighted; and we have not only the evidence of Sir Louis Cavagnari upon the point, but in an interesting work, entitled *Travels in Central Asia*, the writer tells us how he visited the city of Herat, and saw Yakoob Khan, who, at the age of 16, alone of all his Court and Ministers, had sufficient acuteness to detect the European, under M. Vambiry's disguise of a Dervish. I think this shows that we, at least, were justified in dealing with Yakoob Khan as a man who was capable of taking his own part and of governing the Afghan people. The desire of the Indian Government was that Afghanistan should be erected into a friendly and independent Power; and so much was this the case that, in a despatch from the Indian Government, it was said that—

> "We might have made a much more rapid advance; but we had serious cause to apprehend that, by thus precipitating the downfall of Shere Ali, we might irretrievably shake to pieces all the independent materials of government in Afghanistan, bequeathing to Shere Ali's successor no stable basis of authority, and placing ourselves in a position from which we could not afterwards retire without surrendering to anarchy and civil conflict a State which it was our object to strengthen and consolidate in the manner most conducive to peacable and friendly relations with it."

Well, my Lords, the Government have been pursued by singular misfortunes. In the first place, Shere Ali fled from his capital, and died, and we were thus prevented from treating him as the Ruler of the country; and, secondly, Yakoob Khan disappointed our expectations. But it cannot be said that the Indian Government were not fully prepared for the eventualities which followed upon Shere Ali's death, for they had carefully considered British interests in Afghanistan, independently of Afghan rule; and in another despatch the Indian Government say—

> "Nor do we disguise from ourselves that the practical value of the Treaty mainly depends upon the character and disposition of the Ameer

> and his successors. Relations established with Afghanistan under the present favourable conditions, and with the most promising prospects, may, of course, be again impaired either by the disloyalty of Afghan Princes or by the alienation of their unrequited confidence. In either case complications may arise against which no present precautions on our part can completely guarantee our successors in the government of India. We have, therefore, been careful to secure for British interests and influence in Afghanistan a position substantially independent of the personal caprices of any Afghan Ruler; and for the effectual maintenance of the position the Treaty provides strong material guarantees, by the territorial conditions which place the British Power in permanent command of the main avenues from India to Cabul."

Well, what were the facts? All Englishmen were horrified to hear that most sad history of the death of Sir Louis Cavagnari. Notwithstanding the gallant defence made by him and his followers, they were overwhelmed by numbers, and almost the entire Mission was sacrificed. Orders were immediately given to Sir Frederick Roberts to commence his advance. We held the Khyber Pass and other positions which, in 1841, we had neglected to secure; and we were thus able, within six weeks, to re-occupy Cabul and to avenge that massacre. The brave conduct and the admirable disposition of our troops was the theme of universal praise. The Nawab Sir Gholam Hussein Khan, a man who, perhaps, is better able than anyone else to judge, expressed the opinion that he knew of no combination of insurgents which was carried out under circumstances so favourable, and no defeat so overwhelming as that which was inflicted upon them. He also expressed his distinct belief that we should not have any further trouble in that respect. I earnestly hope that his expectation may be realized. I cannot help going a step further, and noticing with satisfaction the terms in which Her Majesty has referred to the conduct of her Native as well as British troops. Her Majesty has graciously observed—

> "The skill exhibited in the rapid march upon Cabul, and in the advances upon the other lines of action, reflects the highest credit upon the officers and men of my British and Native forces, whose bravery has shone with its wonted lustre in every collision with the enemy."

My Lords, I will not attempt to predict what the future policy of Her Majesty's Government is to be. We have heard a great deal of prophecy lately with regard to it; but of one thing I am certain, and that is, that it would not be possible to withdraw our troops from Afghanistan. Were we to do so, we should not only produce a bad effect upon the minds of the Natives, but also in the minds of those independent Princes who have been so much impressed at the boldness of our policy and the success of our arms. We should also run the risk of leaving those Afghans who had befriended us at the mercy of anyone who might happen to get the upper hand in the country. Turning to South Africa, let us see what has taken place there. The Zulu power has been broken up, the Zulu Chief captured, and the whole country separated into different Governments. An insurrection headed by Secocoeni and Moirosi broke out on the borders of Basuto Land; but all these matters are now set at rest. Her Majesty goes on to observe—

> "I hope the time is not far distant when an important advance may be made towards the establishment of a Union or Confederation under which the powers of self-government, already enjoyed by the inhabitants of Cape Colony, may be extended to my subjects in other parts of South Africa."

In reply to a despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, urging the adoption of the Confederation Act of 1877, Sir Bartle Frere's Ministers say—

> "The whole of the South African communities are anxiously awaiting the result of the war on the Natal and Transvaal Frontiers. Pending its settlement, Ministers cannot but feel that to submit general proposals for the establishment of a South African Union, or Confederation, to the Cape Parliament would be to invite the Legislature to commit itself to unknown responsibilities. In the event of the war now raging on those Frontiers being concluded and peace established on a satisfactory basis, it will afford Ministers great pleasure to submit to the Legislature proposals of the nature referred to in the despatch, in full confidence that they will meet on the part of the Parliamentary Representatives of this Colony with a favourable reception."

There is now no danger from the Native Tribes, and I very much hope that Ministers will be able to carry out those views which they express in that despatch. Having now touched upon the topics in Her Majesty's gracious Speech relating to external affairs, I will ask your Lordships to follow me while I refer briefly to those more immediately affecting domestic questions. Her Majesty refers to the appointment of the Royal Commission issued to inquire into the causes of Agricultural Depression throughout the

United Kingdom. I can only hope that by the time the Commission has completed its labours and made its Report the circumstances which have called it into existence may have ceased to trouble us. Two distinguished agriculturists have recently returned from America, and I have no doubt that the information they have gained there may lead to very important results. Before I leave this subject I should like to express my satisfaction at the manner in which the landowners in this country have come forward during this crisis, and the efforts which they have made to alleviate the sufferings of their tenantry. I believe that the tenant farmers of England, with whom I wish to express my deepest sympathy, will begin to realize that the oft-repeated statement that the interest of the tenant and the landlord are bound up together is not a mere sentiment, but a reality. Her Majesty goes on to deal with what has taken place in Ireland. I think, my Lords, I am right in saying that the crops in that country have at least been equal to, if not better than, those in this country; but, on the other hand, the distress has been far more widely spread; and if such is the case, then I think it behoves the Government to give the subject their immediate and most anxious consideration with the view of devising measures of relief. I will not pursue the subject further, because the noble Lord who sits on my left, and who proposes to second the Motion for the Address which I have the honour to move, will deal with the question at length; but I cannot sit down without adding my tribute of appreciation of the noble effort which has been made by the illustrious lady who occupies the highest position in that country for the immediate alleviation of the distress. I can only say that I earnestly trust that the hope she held out of being able to avert a famine may be fully realized. With regard to the measures that are promised to us by the Government, two of them—the Criminal Code Bill and the Bankruptcy Bill—have already been laid upon the Table of this House, the former having undergone fresh and minute re-consideration at the hands of the distinguished Judge who originally prepared it. The Bankruptcy Bill has already been fully explained to the House by the noble and learned Earl on the Woolsack, and I believe it is admitted on all sides that some relief is needed in that direction. Since the present Government came into Office they have carried several measures of great utility, such as the Summary Jurisdiction Act and the Artizans' Dwellings Act; and I trust that an Act for the Amendment of the Lunacy Laws may be added to that list. I am thankful that Her Majesty's Government have taken in hand the Land Question. If any statement can be devised which, while maintaining the principle of the Law of Entail, will yet give relief to those owners who feel that the burdens on their estates are greater than they can bear, and those others who think that by sacrificing a small and possibly outlying portion of their estates they may materially improve the value of the remainder, I am sure it will be welcomed by the majority of your Lordships. With regard to the Bill for the simplification of conveyancing, any measure which will diminish the expense and will shorten the time occupied by the transfer will be very cordially received by your Lordships. It only remains for me to express my thanks for the kind indulgence which your Lordships have been pleased to extend to me, and to assure you that it has been the means of very materially lightening the anxious task of addressing your Lordships for the first time. I beg to move that an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty in reply to Her Majesty's most gracious Speech from the Throne as follows:—

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,

"WE, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Majesty for the most gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.

"We humbly thank Your Majesty for informing us that Your Majesty's relations with all the Powers continue to be friendly, and that the course of events since the prorogation of Parliament has tended to furnish additional security to the maintenance of European peace, on the principles laid down by the Treaty of Berlin, although much still remains to be done to repair the disorder with which the late war has affected many parts of the Turkish Empire.

"We humbly thank Your Majesty for informing us that a Convention has been concluded between Your Majesty's Government and that of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, for the suppression of the Slave Trade.

"We humbly thank Your Majesty for informing us that, in conformity with the provisions of the Treaty of Gundamak, Your Majesty's Envoy, with his retinue, was honourably received and entertained by the Ameer of Afghanistan at Cabul, but that, while engaged in the exercise of their duty, he and those connected with the Embassy were treacherously attacked by overwhelming numbers, and, after an heroic defence, were almost all massacred.

"We humbly thank Your Majesty for informing us that, an outrage so intolerable calling for condign chastisement, Your Majesty's troops, which, pursuant to the stipulations of the Treaty, either had withdrawn or were withdrawing from the territories governed by the Ameer, were ordered to retrace their steps; and that the skill exhibited in the rapid march upon Cabul, and in the advances upon the other lines of action, reflects the highest credit upon the officers and men of Your Majesty's British and native forces, whose bravery has shone with its wonted lustre in every collision with the enemy.

"We humbly thank Your Majesty for informing us that the abdication of the Ameer and the unsettled condition of the country render the recall of the troops impossible for the present; but that the principle on which Your Majesty's Government has hitherto acted remains unchanged, and that, while determined to make the frontiers of Your Majesty's Indian Empire strong, Your Majesty desires to be in friendly relations alike with those who may rule in Afghanistan and with the people of that country.

"We humbly thank Your Majesty for informing us that Your Majesty's anticipations as to the early establishment of peace in South Africa have been fulfilled; and that the capture and deposition of the Zulu King, and the breaking up of the military organization on which his dynasty was based, have relieved Your Majesty's possessions in that part of the world from a danger which seriously impeded their advancement and consolidation.

"We humbly thank Your Majesty for informing us that a native outbreak of considerable importance in Basutoland has been effectually quelled by Your Majesty's Colonial forces, while the Transvaal has been freed from the depredations of a powerful Chief, who, having successfully resisted the former government of that country, had persistently resisted all attempts at conciliation.

"We humbly thank Your Majesty for informing us that Your Majesty has reason to hope that the time is approaching when an important advance may be made towards the establishment of an Union or Confederation under which the powers of self-government, already enjoyed by the inhabitants of the Cape Colony, may be extended to Your Majesty's subjects in other parts of South Africa; and we thank Your Majesty for directing that Papers on these and other matters shall be forthwith laid before us.

"We humbly thank Your Majesty for informing us that the Commission appointed to inquire into the causes of agricultural depression throughout the United Kingdom is pursuing its labours; and also for informing us of the special precautions which Your Majesty's Government have deemed it necessary to take in view of the threatened distress in Ireland, and of the measures which the course they have adopted will render necessary.

"We humbly assure Your Majesty that our careful consideration shall be given to the measures which may be submitted to us, and that we earnestly trust that the blessing of the Almighty will attend our labours and direct our efforts."

THE EARL OF ROSSE: My Lords, in rising to second the Address that has just been moved by my noble Friend on my right, I think I need not refer to the paragraphs in Her Majesty's Speech relating to foreign affairs, beyond congratulating the House upon the maintenance of peace. Passing over those topics, I will confine my remarks to the paragraph which deals with agricultural depression, and especially to the state of Ireland. My Lords, when I see in the papers columns headed "State of Ireland," such as have appeared lately, I think it rather ominous; it looks as if there was some special interest at work, and that, in fact, she is in a disturbed state. For the last few years, both in Ireland and in England, there has been, no doubt, a gradual diminution of prosperity. We have seen trade decline on this side of the Channel; we have seen the manufacturing districts far from flourishing; and various events have happened which have shown a diminution of that rapidly-increasing prosperity enjoyed some years ago. We have heard, during the last year especially, that the agricultural interest of this country was specially affected. Farmers were giving up their farms, in consequence of not being able to make sufficient profits to pay the amount of their rent; but in Ireland the state of things is reported to be far worse than in England and Scotland. As long ago as October the Government began to make inquiries as to the condition of the state of things in Ireland. A Special Report was sent to the Local Government Board, and appeared in the daily Press, and there was no doubt that the state of things was serious, though not so bad as at the time of the Famine. The Report stated that the general average of the harvest appears to be inferior, and the crops deficient and below those of last year; the oat crop, however, is reported to be good and plentiful. It also states that fuel is scarce, that the turf or peat had suffered much from the excessive rains, that great want was anticipated in Munster, and that the farmers were in great difficulties owing to the banks and loan companies having refused to make further advances of money. In Connaught the Report stated that the largest amount of distress was to be expected, and on the West coast there would be considerable local distress. The poor rates, however, were not excessive, and the Report gives a list of 45 Unions where the poor rates are 3*s.* in the pound and upwards, and in three only above 4*s.* At that time the number relieved in the workhouses was rather in excess of last year; it has averaged about 11 per cent over the corresponding period of last year; the total number of in-door and out-door paupers was 84,000 as against 77,000 at the corresponding period of last year, an increase of about 10 per cent. Since that date pauperism has still been slightly on the increase. From the Report which has been made to the Lord Lieutenant it appears that, on January 25 last, the total number of in-door and out-door paupers in Ireland was 105,000 against 94,000 at the corresponding date last year, and there was a larger increase in October. But, in order to form a correct judgment on the present state of things, we have only to compare the total of 105,000 with the numbers during the Famine, when there were more than 900,000, or nearly 1,000,000 of in-door and out-door paupers in Ireland, so that it is a great exaggeration to say that our present position can at all be compared with the Famine time. As to the cause of this depression, the Report remarks that the crops have been less than they were in 1871 or 1872, and that the value of the potato crop was only about half, or less than half, of the average. There had been a pretty general depression from 1876 to 1879. The bank note circulation has decreased between December, 1876, and December, 1879, from a total of £7,750,000 down to £6,250,000. The total of bank deposits and notes has decreased in the same period from £42,000,000 to £36,750,000; but it should, at the same time, be borne in mind that the last figure is still twice as large as in 1863, and three times as large as in 1848. It is quite clear, from the circumstances I have already referred to, and which I wish more fully to dwell upon, that shopkeepers have been in the habit of advancing small sums to tenants, and they have given credit to a very large amount since the passing of the Land Act. When the country is prosperous everything goes on smoothly, and the tenant does not really see his true position; but when we come to depression, when everyone finds more difficulty in earning a livelihood, or in paying the just demands made upon him, then the pressure is felt, and the banks and shopkeepers begin to withhold the credit they have so freely granted up to that time. The landlords, in every case, have given time, which is a most just thing. As I have said, the depression is attributed to the bad potato harvest, the loss of hay through floods in the Valley of the Shannon and many other places, the bad barley harvest, the inferior condition of the hay, and the unusual amount of disease amongst cattle. I am afraid those misfortunes will be severely felt in many parts of the country. There are, however, one or two circumstances on which we may congratulate ourselves. The autumn has been remarkably dry, and, as far as fuel is concerned, the present position of the poor is far less serious in most places than it was some years ago, when coal near a railway cost from 40*s.* to 50*s.* a-ton, while now it is the fair and moderate price of 25*s.* a-ton. Then the diminution in the numbers of the agricultural labourers from Ireland to the harvest in this country has contributed to the prevalent distress, and especially in the Western counties, from which the harvesters chiefly came, the result being that there is in those parts a considerable excess of the supply of labour over the demand. In the West of Ireland, where the population principally consists of the labouring class, the emigration has been so much smaller—7,000 less than last year, and those who did go earning smaller wages—that the loss in wages is estimated at £100,000. I am very glad that Her Majesty's Government have been fully alive to the necessity of guarding against all emergencies. Your Lordships are aware that, by various Acts, sums of money can be lent at a low rate of interest, in order to encourage tenants to improve their estates by useful works in the distressed districts; and in order to provide work for the people, and to alleviate the distress in a profitable and legitimate manner, large sums are being lent to landed proprietors. The additional privileges of the postponement of interest for two years was granted by a Circular issued in November; and, by a Circular issued last month, loans to the total amount of £250,000 at 1 per cent, instead of 3½ per cent interest, will be granted for unskilled labour only. That is a course which I can heartily commend, as it is calculated to furnish relief without pauperizing those receiving it. My Lords, from my own observation, and from what I hear on all sides, there is no doubt whatever that the authorities in Ireland are doing their best to meet the difficulties in which the country is placed, and the very useful work has been commenced with energy. But it must be borne in mind that these measures, which are exceptional in their character though necessary at the present moment, are not designed to be permanent. Wages now in Ireland have fallen rather; and in my own neighbourhood, where the rate of wages in winter has been 1*s.* 8*d.* for several years, it is now 1*s.* 4*d.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* per day. Much has been done to reclaim waste lands, and I strongly advocate a continuance of that as a means of increasing the prosperity of the country. I may say that in the West of Ireland the people have been thankful for the valuable assistance sent to them. As to the political aspect of the question, I must regret that, when all who have the true interests of the country at heart are doing their best to meet the difficulty, hard words and mis-statements calculated to disturb the country should have been uttered. In 1869, Mr. Gladstone's Government passed an Irish Land Act; but no improvement as regards the tranquillity of the country seems to have resulted from that measure. Now, it appears to be the object of some people to create what is called a peasant proprietary, which seems to mean peasant proprietors with their estates deeply encumbered. That is a proposition which can hardly be looked upon with favour, especially when the question comes on, where is the money to come from? The country would hardly be more prosperous or more content were there no landlords. I will not detain your Lordships longer, but will simply second the Address. [See page 14.]

Earl GRANVILLE: My Lords, having been in this House for many years, I have observed that the usual practice for a person in my position, who speaks early in a debate upon the Address, is this: He pays a compliment to the Mover and Seconder, when it is deserved. He makes some very general observations on the legislation which has been promised in the Speech from the Throne, adds some remarks upon what has passed during the Recess, and asks some questions as to the present and future policy of the Government. But, before I attempt to perform any part of this duty, you will allow me to express, for myself and for my noble Friends around me, how completely we agree with the remarks of the noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Onslow) as to our satisfaction that the health and strength of Her Majesty have enabled her to arrive here to-day, amid the acclamations of the people, on one of the most important and graceful occasions for Her Majesty's presence among her subjects. Now, with regard to the attempt usually made to get information out of Her Majesty's Government, I am obliged to confess that of late years I have not been very successful in obtaining answers to the questions which I have put, and which appeared to me to relate to matters of great public interest. Nevertheless, I hope to be more fortunate in getting some information which the public await with great anxiety. With respect to the Mover and Seconder of the Address, I can, with the greatest sincerity, congratulate the noble Earl who moved it on the facility and clearness of his speech, which appeared to me the more agreeable because there was added to it a little flavour of Party spirit. With reference to the Seconder of the Address, it is not the first time the noble Earl has spoken in this House. Some time ago there was a speech made by him full of matters about the country to which he belongs; and on that occasion I had an opportunity of complimenting him on the hereditary claims he has to the respect of this House. With regard to the legislation promised in Her Majesty's gracious Speech, I have this to remark—that on the opening of the six last Sessions the promise of legislation has on each occasion been small, and even that small promise has not been kept. That legislation has been impeded by Parliamentary obstruction, and by wars and rumours of wars, is true; but I have always doubted whether Her Majesty's Government much regretted it—whether they did not wish by a masterly inactivity to show a brilliant contrast to the legislative energy of their Predecessors. It seems, however, that I was wrong, and that they were only concentrating their efforts on the last Session—that, like the Irish postboy, they were reserving their trot for the avenue. The Secretary of State for the Colonies told us the other day that this was to be a Session of real work. No one denies that the Government have the legal right to keep a Parliament together for seven years. But it is a question whether it is right, especially in a Conservative sense, to put the utmost strain upon the Septennial Act, particularly when there are a host of new and important issues upon which the constituencies have had no opportunity of giving an opinion. I own there are temptations in this case. The large majority which insures the existence of a Government which is considered by them necessary for the safety of the Empire—their misgivings as to the result of the General Election—these are temptations, and, if I am right with respect to their wishes on the subject of legislation, it would be a pity to lose a Parliament so admirably fitted to do nothing. But that the Government really expect to carry an extended list of important measures I can hardly believe. Judging by former averages, one or two is all that they can hope for out of the whole. There is, indeed, one measure not announced in the Queen's Speech, but which, I am told, will appear in the shape of a Private Bill, on which I heartily congratulate your Lordships. It may possibly prove to be the most useful measure of this Parliament. I called attention last Session to the miserable supply of water in the Metropolis for the extinction of fire. A noble Earl (the Earl of Camperdown), who had often, without any encouragement from the Government, brought the whole subject before your Lordships, announced his intention of asking your Lordships to agree to a Resolution on the subject. Mr. Cross, however, told us that he intended to take the matter in hand, and deprecated further discussion in this House till he could make his statement. I believe that he fulfilled his pledge, and has been successfully working on the lines of the excellent Reports of the Society of Arts. With regard to any retrospect as to what has happened during the Recess, I have this difficulty. It has been usual during a Recess for the Opposition, who have plenty of leisure, to make frequent extra-Parliamentary speeches, and for Ministers, who are more fully occupied, to speak at much greater intervals, reserving themselves for the meeting of Parliament. The present Cabinet, small in numbers, and, perhaps, not the worse for that, contains most distinguished orators. In 1878, a week had not elapsed after the Prorogation before Cabinet Ministers were beginning to harangue the Provinces. In 1879 the majority of the Cabinet have done more of what is vulgarly called "stumping the country" than any previous Administration has done during all the Recesses of any one Parliament. I am bound to say that Her Majesty's Opposition have not been remiss in doing their duty in this respect, and the result is that the people are constantly hearing both sides of the subject. That does not diminish the importance of discussing these matters fully in Parliament; but it takes off the gloss which might otherwise here belong to them. Some Members of the Government have complained of the use of strong language; but I am quite sure that that is a feeling in which the Prime Minister does not share. We all know with what ridicule he has treated such mealy-mouthed objections to strong language on vital questions; and, therefore, though he may approve his friends and supporters in calling the Opposition unpatriotic enemies to their country, and men who wish to break up the Empire abroad and bring about revolution at home, he could hardly consider them as compliments, or that they hardly gave to the Opposition that monopoly of abuse which is attributed to them. Among the subjects discussed has been the depression in the trade and agriculture of the country, and the state of foreign affairs. As regards agriculture, I am a little surprised that not one word of sympathy is expressed in the Queen's Speech as to the depression under which the whole agriculture of the United Kingdom is suffering at this moment. As regards trade, leading Members of the Government have spoken in the most decided way as to the impossibility of reverting to Protection, direct or indirect, as a mode of relieving distress. But in declaring that a return to Protection was impossible, I regret certain language which has been held by some Members of the Government. I regret I do not see the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury) here to-night, not only on account of his indisposition, which I hope is not serious, but on account of the reference I intend to make. The noble Marquess, speaking in a town which is supposed to be the head-quarters of Free Trade, took credit as a Freetrader for having reduced the duty on a single article in the Indian tariff at a time when the Indian Debt was being increased. He went on, still as a Freetrader, to deplore the walls of Protection which he found surrounding most of the great countries of the world, and then suddenly, and apparently to the astonishment of his hearers, he expressed the deepest regret at the complete manner in which Sir Robert Peel and his successors had adopted Free Trade as far as we were concerned, instead of retaining the duties on a number of articles which might have enabled us to haggle with foreign Governments, varying as we went along our own import duties according to the fancies and prejudices of the States with which we were dealing. Now, my Lords, the noble Marquess is, I am sure, very anxious, as he stated, to persuade foreign countries to reduce their tariffs, and he finds no doubt a difficulty, from the fact of our having few reductions left to make, in dealing with statesmen who believe that to reduce a duty is to confer a benefit upon us and not upon the inhabitants of their own country. But has he reflected upon the immense difficulty which language such as his, and such as the much stronger expressions used by the first Legal Adviser of the Crown in the House of Commons, throws in the way of our diplomatic agents when endeavouring to obtain a reduction? Secretaries of State and First Law Officers of the Crown cannot make public speeches exclusively for home consumption—they get published abroad; and is it not certain that a Protectionist foreign statesman will say—"I believe the reduction of duties is dangerous to the industries of my country; but I am also convinced that they have proved to be so even for those of Great Britain, for do I not find some of the most important personages of your Government expressing extreme regret that for 30 years the freedom of your commerce has been complete? Either it has been an advantage or it has not; and it is perfectly impossible that it should be an advantage if your ablest men are of opinion that it would have been wise to exclude our goods because we did not admit yours." I presume it is from some practical experience of the difficulty of meeting such arguments that the Under Secretary of State has, I am glad to see, been employing language which is entirely opposed to the regrets expressed by his Chief. The advantages of Free Trade for this country have not been more clearly shown by our extraordinary industrial prosperity during the quarter of a century following the Repeal of the Corn Laws than by the fact of our having suffered less in the recent time of depression than other countries afflicted with Protection. That this is so is proved in a striking manner by the Board of Trade tables, which show that while there has been hardly any diminution in the amount of goods which we have exported, the value of those goods has only fallen 8 per cent; whereas the decrease in the value of our imports has been more than 30 per cent. A year ago I stated that the Government had for two previous years been seeing bits of blue sky not visible to the unofficial eye; and I asserted my belief that if they only stuck to their text they would, at last, find themselves in the right. I believe that the revival of trade has been retarded by the want of political as well as commercial confidence; but the tide has certainly turned, and although there may be danger from exaggerated speculation, I shall be surprised if, during the next few years, we have not additional proofs of the industrial superiority of a country enjoying Free Trade over those which interpose artificial obstacles in the way of its full development. I am glad to see that Ministers in France give no encouragement, at all events, to increased Protection in that rich country. With regard to agriculture, I am afraid the question of revival is one for the future and not for the present. Farmers have been ruined, landowners much embarrassed, and labourers suffering, though to a much less degree. The immediate cause has been the coincidence of a succession of bad harvests in this country with a succession of wonderfully good harvests in America, accompanied by a great depression among consumers of agricultural produce both here and in the United States. The First Lord of the Treasury said last year that this was the only interest which had suffered from Free Trade. I do not believe that Protection would have helped the farmer more than it did in the years when it still existed, while it would have been absolute ruin to the labourer. But the strain of competition has been great, and figures are given which threaten much more severe competition. One grain of comfort might be derived from the revival of one of those branches of industry to which I have alluded. Seven months ago there was not an expert in the iron trade who did not think it was doubtful whether we could compete with the American ironmaster in the neutral markets, and was not certain that we should never send a ton of iron or steel again to the States. For the last four months we have been doing the Americans that which Protectionists would call the injury of inundating them at their own request with iron. Is not this a lesson that we must not attach too much importance to the gloomy predictions even of the most experienced men in times of great depression? But of this we may be sure—that a competition which has reduced the rent of land in the Eastern States of America to *nil* will make it necessary for us to make every effort to free British agriculture from all that may clog its most beneficial exercise. I am especially glad to have heard the announcement made in the Speech in reference to a Bill for some alteration in the Land Laws. Forty years ago I formed my own opinion that the Land Laws of France and those of this country were alike in extremes — those of France in taking away nearly all freedom of testamentary disposition and making the partition of estates almost compulsory, and those of England in restricting sales, in making the transfer of land expensive, in cramping the liberty of the supposed possessor, in discouraging improvements by the landowner and the best cultivation by the tenant, and by making artificial difficulties in the way of either dividing or agglomerating estates. I believe that change is necessary, and that some change would be desired by farmers and would not really be objected to by landlords, whatever might be the feelings of some of their advisers. Those changes should be in the direction of simplifying titles; of making the presumption of law, both as regards the succession to land and the relation of landlord, conform, as far as possible, to right principle, and, without destroying freedom of contract, should give more liberty of action to the nominal landowner. I am quite certain that if the measure contemplated by Her Majesty's Government carries out some such principles as these, the measure will be one which we on this side of the House can approve. I should hardly venture to speak of the subject of distress in Ireland after the full manner in which the noble Earl opposite has referred to the subject. I am exceedingly anxious to hear from the Government the way in which they intend to deal with this question in detail. I hope they have not neglected the experience gained by Lord Russell's Government, and that they will use the means best adapted to relieve distress without in any way interfering with the general labour market. I think it is not possible to make sufficient provision, without deliberately breaking the solemn provision of an Act of Parliament passed not long ago. My Lords, I am not one of those who impute wickedness to Irishmen because they advocate Home Rule, if they think conscientiously that it would be for the public advantage. I deplore the fact that men of great ability and influence should waste their efforts upon what I believe to be a sterile agitation, instead of profiting by our present institutions to join with Englishmen and Scotchmen in promoting measures for the welfare of our common country. I use the word sterile advisedly, and I need not argue in this Assembly that it is impossible for Home Rule, such as exists in Canada, could be established in the sister Kingdom. But if you talk of giving to Irishmen more power to do their own local work I entirely agree. I believe what is wanted is a thorough reform of the local governments of Ireland, and that we should then throw upon these reformed bodies the greatest possible amount of local duties and responsibilities. You would in this way relieve the Members of the House of Commons from an intolerable burden that now presses upon them. I regret the violent language used and the violent measures advocated by Mr. Parnell, and I do so on this ground. During the whole of this century there have been two parties in England and Scotland, one very jealous of Ireland and desirous of keeping a heavy hand upon it, and the other anxious to meet whatever was proposed by Irishmen and to act in accordance with their feelings, and even with their prejudices, so far as that could be done without a breach of principle. I believe that during the whole of that time the one party has diminished in strength and the other has gained ground in strength and in numbers; and I do fear that the violent language used by and the proceedings of persons like Mr. Parnell tend to create a re-action in this country, and to make it difficult to go on with those measures of amelioration connected with Ireland which most of us ardently desire. The noble Earl opposite alluded to a recent proposal of Mr. Bright. Mr. Bright is a very remarkable man, and has given much attention to the ills of Ireland, and has suggested measures for their removal, scrupulously endeavouring to make them consistent with a due regard for the rights of property. His proposal may be open to all the objections which have been raised, not only by the Conservative Party, but by men like Mr. Fawcett; but I think there can be no doubt of his honest desire to ameliorate the present state of things. Merely from the fact of agrarian propositions in a different quarter, I have seen Mr. Bright treated as if he were a revolutionary and an agrarian Socialist. In my opinion it is the duty of both Englishmen and Irishmen to discuss questions of this kind calmly and in the spirit of the late Lord Bessborough—a man known and liked in this House, and still more known and liked in his own country of Ireland, for his singular calmness, firmness, and judgment, mixed with the greatest possible liberality in relation to subjects of this kind. Connected with the previous subjects there is a question which, we have been informed on high authority, is the strong point of the Government. Lord Carnarvon last year said that good government made good finance. He immediately apologized for having unintentionally borrowed the phrase from the First Lord of the Treasury. I am afraid that the First Lord owes another apology to Baron Louis, who is quoted by all the contemporary memoirs as having used this expression at the time of the Restoration; and Baron Louis probably owed apologies to the Ministers of Henri Quatre and Queen Elizabeth. The maxim is so obvious that it must have occurred to many minds. That in a time of unusual depression we have been spending an unusual amount of money there is no doubt; that greater expenditure means a certain pressure upon trade and a greater pressure upon those who are employed in re-productive labour, no one can question. The great question is this: Whether the objects of Her Majesty's Government and the results which have attended their policy justify the evil of an increased expenditure. Her Majesty's Ministers have spoken a good deal on foreign affairs; but they certainly have not given those accurate detailed explanations with regard to their policy which we might expect in Parliament. They have chiefly confined themselves to some vague general declarations as to England having risen in the scale of nations, and that sort of thing; and then they turn round upon the Opposition, and adopt a peculiar mode of proceeding. They imagine a foreign policy adopted by the late Government, and it is much easier to do this in consequence of the foreign policy of the late Government having been seriously questioned in Parliament. Then on this assumed policy they proceed with the greatest satisfaction to throw stones and sticks at us. I see the noble Lord opposite the Under Secretary of State for War

(Viscount Bury) laughing; but it is exactly what he did when he went to Nottingham a short time ago. He there made a most eulogistic speech in favour of the foreign policy of the present Government, and then he proceeded to find the most severe fault with one act of the foreign policy after another which had been pursued by successive Liberal Secretaries of State. The noble Lord has great advantages in discussing these questions. We know that he has a mind open to conviction on political subjects. He has the advantage not generally possessed by noble Lords on this side or on that side of the House. He has been able to study these questions from different points of view. Unlike the knights of old, he has been able to see both the silver and the gold sides of the shield. What, however, puzzles me a little is how he can throw such blame upon acts done at the Foreign Office in the time of Lord Palmerston, Lord Clarendon, Lord Russell, Mr. Gladstone, and myself, when I fancied that during the greater part of that time he appeared to be a supporter of those public men. Now, I do not object to his giving his more or less fixed opinions to the electors of Nottingham. But I have a right to claim that a Member of the Government, speaking with official authority, should be particular as to his facts. He told Nottingham that the late Government had abandoned the Black Sea to the Russians. What are the facts? One of the conditions of the Treaty of Paris was the neutralization of the Black Sea. It was not one of the conditions recorded by Count Buol and Lord Clarendon as thought necessary at the Conference of Vienna by the Powers of Europe as a condition of peace. It was an afterthought of M. Drouyn de Lhuys. Lord Palmerston thought this provision would have the practical effect of giving time to Turkey to recover the naval position she held before the unfortunate destruction of her Fleet at Sinope. He did not think it could be permanently retained. He never thought that condition could last. What was the opinion of Mr. Gladstone on that subject? He denounced it in the strongest manner as a condition to which it was impossible that a great military Power could be subjected, seeing that it deprived Russia of the right of defending its own coasts and its own trade. I do not expect to convince the noble Lord by citing Mr. Gladstone's opinion; but the noble Earl the Prime Minister thought it a most humiliating condition, and he was supported by the noble Marquess the present Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who, with his usual fertility, gave several illustrations of the absurd injustice of the condition. France told the Emperor of Russia that, in her opinion, that condition ought to be modified; Germany did the same; Austria followed Germany; and Italy followed Austria; and we were left alone in our silence. Prince Gortchakoff, in an awkward and discourteous manner as regarded the co-signatories of the Treaty of 1856, denounced the duty of the Emperor to be bound by it. We called upon Europe to join with us in repelling what seemed to us an offensive assumption. Baron Brunnow tried day after day to obtain from me some inkling of what would be our course if the retractation was made. I positively refused to give that information until that fact was accomplished. The most ample retractation was made—one that has been quoted with effect by Her Majesty's present Government — and then, and not till then, all Europe agreed not to abandon the Black Sea to Russia, as the Under Secretary of State stated at Nottingham, but to substitute for it another arrangement. It was to admit not only Russia, but Turkey also, with her magnificent Fleet, to the Black Sea, and to give the latter the power which she did not then possess of calling in her maritime allies even in time of peace. The Turkish Ambassador stated that was the very thing that Turkey wanted. It is an arrangement which no one can pretend was of the slightest advantage to Russia in the last war. I remember a conversation in this House on the subject. I described the alternatives which we might have adopted, all of which seemed to me to be bad. The noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury) following asked whether another had not suggested itself to me—namely, to do nothing. The suggestion did not occur to me, and, at all events, it has not been adopted by him in a somewhat similar case. When Russia claimed Batoum, which she has now got, the noble Marquess was not satisfied in doing nothing. He secretly engaged with Russia to join Europe in giving sanction to their possessing the best port in Asia Minor. I really think the noble Lord has given me a fair *locus standi* to come forward to do what I have never done before—defend the Foreign Office. We have been attacked for having during the late Administration said so little about foreign affairs. It is a fault which cannot be imputed to the present Cabinet. I doubt whether any former Administration ever talked so much. It has its advantages, but they are hardly of a lasting character. In the long run it does not give strength, and when so much is said it is almost impossible for Ministers not to contradict one another and even themselves. We all remember, when the Treaty of Berlin was signed, Her Majesty's Ministers told us they had saved Russia going to Constantinople—which I do not believe at all—that they had brought back peace with honour, that they had led Europe, and that they had saved Europe. It was pointed out the other day that the secret Memorandum was necessary to induce Prince Bismarck to hold the Conference at all. It is said that when Russia endeavoured to deviate from the line traced in it, he kept her to the point. It is said that when the British Plenipotentiaries, frightened by the storm raised by the publication of the secret Memorandum, tried to withdraw from the concession they had promised respecting Batoum, Prince Bismark held them to their bond. Could anyone doubt that Prince Bismarck had an important hand in the Treaty? Well, did he talk of saving and leading Europe? No, he minimized his share, his interest in the work; he described in the humblest illustration the nature of his work. I have some doubt whether the real strength lay with those who had talked the biggest. The First Lord of the Admiralty the other day said that it was now known that when England said that a thing was not to be done, all the power and strength of England would be exerted to prevent it. I do not know any such a thing. It happens that at the end of Mr. Gladstone's Administration I said in this House—and I said it without contradiction and without the fear of contradiction—that we had never said one word to which we had not adhered. Is it possible to say this regarding this very Treaty of Berlin? Read the celebrated Circular of the noble Marquess. Could anything be stronger than the objections stated in it to the San Stefano Treaty? As to the annexation by Russia of Bessarabia, the acquisition of the important harbour of Batoum, the strongholds of Armenia, the indemnity from the Turks—not one of these objections has been met by the Treaty of Berlin. It is true that the noble Marquess says that those who think so cannot ever have read the Circular, because there is a sentence in the Circular —"These results arise not so much from a single Article as from the operation of the instrument as a whole." And we are told that the political and military supremacy of the Sultan in Eastern Roumelia will compensate for all the other objections; but even if this were so, which no one can think, what does the supremacy of the Sultan in Eastern Roumelia amount to? He cannot garrison the impregnable barrier, and he has not sufficient interest with the Governor of Eastern Roumelia to obtain the dismissal of Militia officers who insult him. Now, my objections to the Berlin Treaty are not great; there are great faults in it, but it was a tolerable arrangement under the whole of the circumstances. But what I object to is the singular inconsistency of the Treaty with the big words you used. The Circular had created great enthusiasm among certain classes of the supporters of the Government. The Treaty of Berlin was an immense disappointment to these. And this disappointment drove the Government into the most indefensible Convention that England has made during this century — a Convention which, while it destroys the proud boast of a Conservative statesman that England is strong because she fears nothing and wants nothing, throws upon us and our survivors indefinite liabilities under all possible contingencies, without giving us the slightest additional means of carrying out those engagements or of reforming the Turks. With regard to these two Treaties, I beg to ask Her Majesty's Government a few questions. We know that Turkey has fulfilled her engagements towards Russia and towards Austria. What progress has been made with respect to the concession, which the Prime Minister described in Knightsbridge to be so great, to Greece? Are the other Powers agreed on the subject? Are we acting with them? Again, what progress has been made in carrying out the Treaty respecting Montenegro? I entirely agree with the Mover of the Address in what he said on the subject of the Convention for the suppression of the Slave Trade, and I hope it will be more effectual than the promises in the same direction hitherto given. I would also like to know something about that mysterious incident, the demonstration with regard to the persecution of the missionary and his assistant, and the menaces, if any, which were used by Sir Austen Layard, and what was the ultimate success of the measures which he took? With regard to Cyprus, if Lord Salisbury had been here, I should have liked to know whether the internal administration has profited by the strange expedient of placing it under his personal superintendence, rather than committing it to the care of the Colonial Office, so full of traditions? I will venture to ask the noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Beaconsfield), whether the steaming in during the healthy time of the year of men-of-war into the pestilential harbour of Famagosta, and steaming out again as soon as possible, is a fulfilment of the pledge which was to have been redeemed eight months ago as to an available port for all our commerce, and whether it will contribute much to the establishment of a place of arms? There is a long paragraph in the Queen's Speech about South Africa. I entirely join with the noble Mover in rejoicing that the war is ended. The fact of its being at an end does not in the slightest diminish my regret—I may say, my indignation—that it ever was commenced. Two Ministers have lately laid great stress on the fact that the Government not only did not sanction, but forbade the war, and they greatly deplored it. But the war was either just or necessary, or it was not. If it was just and necessary, why did the Government forbid it? If it was not just and necessary, I can conceive no more deplorable proof of weakness—nothing of a worse example—than that a war should be begun and carried on with varied disaster and success, at a great cost of blood and treasure, with the perfect acquiescence of a Government which deplores, but does not prevent it. It is true that a third Minister has since declared that now the war is over, and successfully, he thinks that the Government were wrong and Sir Bartle Frere was right. As Papers are promised, I presume they will give us the grounds for the promise which has often been held out to us of a speedy Confederation, and the mode in which it is proposed to settle the country. This Speech does not announce, like a previous one, that the annexation of the Transvaal has been received throughout the Province with enthusiasm. I presume the Papers will show whether Sir Garnet Wolseley's declarations were the result of instructions from home, and, if not, whether they have been approved. There are two paragraphs in the Speech from the Throne on a subject upon which the interest of the country is deeply concentrated. Forty years ago a dreadful disaster happened, the worst that has happened to this country during this century. The bitter lesson was taken to heart by the East India Company, by successive Advisers of the Crown, by successive Viceroys and distinguished Anglo-Indian soldiers and administrators. It was only after the accession of the present Government to power that a change of policy was decided upon, a policy not announced, but carefully concealed from the people of this country. What has been the result? Let anyone take up the account by the historian Kaye, or the statesman soldier Sir Henry Durant, and shut his eyes to the dates, and he will fancy that he is reading step by step, with the great exception of the incompetency of some British officer, every incident of the present day. In the same way I read in the newspapers of the last year of the easy overrunning of Afghanistan by our troops, of the fanaticism excited by our advance, of the massacre of our gallant Representative, the difficulty in which we found ourselves, and which is indicated in the Queen's Speech, of remaining or going away. I can hardly help fancying that I am hearing the very words which the late Lord Lawrence, with not a grain of that Party feeling which may excite some of us, and with almost tears in his eyes for that India which he loved and had served so well, prophesied in conversation to me, as he did in public, the certain results of the step so falsely taken. What is the present position of things? We have some 45,000 British troops there—more are hurrying up from Bombay; we hardly do more than hold our own; we have spent millions in destroying the only Government; the outlying Provinces north and west are in complete anarchy; and all this has been done not to prevent Russia invading us—because that the Prime Minister said was almost impossible—but to destroy the possibility of Russian intrigue. Is it possible to imagine more completely playing the game of Russia or any Power that wishes to intrigue? What the country want to know—and I do not speak merely of the Opposition, thoughtful Conservatives are just as anxious as we are—what we want to know is, what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government? Sir Michael Hicks-Beach pledges the Government to take such measures as will revive the prosperity of the Afghans. The First Lord of the Admiralty says that the policy of the Government is to refrain from annexation except when circumstances absolutely compel them to resort to it, not only for their own preservation, but for the interests of the people annexed. Sir Stafford Northcote says it is a policy of self-defence, and not a policy of annexation. It is a policy which aims at securing India from vain alarms of movements and invasions from outside. It must be exceedingly difficult for Sir Stafford Northcote to define a policy which is at once consistent with the principles he has publicly laid down about the folly of going beyond our former Frontier and the policy which his Colleagues have initiated. Lord Lytton says that it is not the acquisition of territory, but the firm establishment of durable foundations for the future good behaviour of India's Afghan neighbours. Her Majesty's gracious Speech indicates that the troops are to remain until this wild country is settled, and it adds—which really in a State document sounds like a joke at this moment—that it desires to remain on friendly relations with the Rulers who no longer exist, and with the people whose hatred they have so deeply stirred. It is not for me to say that the Government have no policy. But so ignorant is every Peer in this House who is not in the Cabinet of their views, and so accustomed are we to surprises, that I doubt whether there is any one of us who would be much astonished if they heard that the Government had decided either to withdraw to that scientific Frontier of which we have heard so much, but the definition of which is not known to us—the Annexe to the Treaty of Gandamak having been steadily withheld from us—or that they had decided to retain Cabul and Candahar; that they were marching on Herat, or adding a fresh guarantee to our stock with respect to Persia. Surely, my Lords, Her Majesty's Government should give us not vague generalities, but some clear indication of what their policy is. I must make one remark upon the reckless way in which boasts are made even in the Speech from the Throne. The march upon Cabul is described as rapid. The murder of the gallant Cavagnari was on the 3rd of September. The orders to advance were on the 6th, and the distance was 82 miles. How long do you take to make this march?—just one month. The distance from Lundi Kotal, the post on the scientific Frontier in the Khyber, to Cabul, is 157 miles. The order to advance was given on the 6th. The force reached Jellalabad, 52 miles from Lundi Kotal, on the 13th of October, and was, therefore, more than a month in marching 52 miles. These were marches at a pace which a snail would not call rapid. The fault was not in the least that of the officers; it was that of the arrangements and want of preparations of the Indian Government, whom the Government insisted upon our thanking at the end of the Session. My Lords, there are two subjects to which I must allude, though it is with the greatest pain that I do so. A charge has been made by Bishop Colenso of acts done by our countrymen in defiance of all the laws, not of peace, but of acknowledged warfare. I need not say that Bishop Colenso is an important witness, from his position, his high character, and his knowledge of the country. But his sympathy with the Natives, which does him so much honour, his detestation of a war which has appeared to him unjust, unnecessary, and un-Christian, is so strong that it may have warped his judgment in judging of evidence. I devoutly wish that this may be the case. Another Memorial has been presented to the Prime Minister, in calm and almost judicial language, denouncing certain acts committed by the British authorities in Afghanistan contrary to the laws of civilized warfare, and certain to be followed by disgrace and dishonour, and asking for an inquiry. The noble Earl will, I have no doubt, be prepared to say what knowledge he has of these facts, what inquiries have been made, what have been the results, and what course the Government have taken with reference to this matter. The President of the Board of Trade (Viscount Sandon) speaks lightly of struggles unto the death. It is a phrase he uses in every speech of his, and it is a grave question whether such struggles are imminent upon us. The noble Viscount is reported to have stated at Liverpool the other day that our neighbours had enormous Armies, and were trying to injure us in all directions. This is most portentous information, even if true, to be blurted out for the first time by a Cabinet Minister in an electioneering speech. The first part of the intelligence is superfluous—the second is perfectly new to me. Germany, France, Austria, and Italy have all enormous Armies. Are they all or any of them trying to injure us in all directions? And if only one was meant, and that Russia, I wish to know what are the attempts that Russia is known to be making since August last, when the Prime Minister solemnly announced that the Emperor of Russia

> "has fulfilled his engagements with dignity and honour, and is at this moment cordially operating with this country and the other Powers of Europe in a policy the object of which is to secure and maintain the general peace?"

If Viscount Sandon is right, why did the Prime Minister lull us into a false security in August, and why does he tell us in the Speech to-day that the relations of the Queen with Foreign Powers are all friendly? However, whether we are to have a struggle unto death depends much upon our own policy. If our foreign policy is to be conducted on a system of jerks and surprises; if when we touch the Eastern Question we sanction the material advance of Russia, and at the same time make ourselves equally detested by Russians, by Slavs, by Turks, and by Greeks; if in another Continent we carry on a bloody and inglorious war, which, Ministers tell you, they not only did not order, but actually prohibited and which they openly deplore; if in that Continent you annex settlers of a European race—a race as obstinate as ourselves—and after promising them freedom, announce that you mean to govern them despotically and to govern them for ever; if in India you disregard all the lessons of experience and all the best recent advice, and pour out blood and treasure on a mountainous district, which you absolutely manure as a hotbed for hostile intrigues, and which it is equally difficult to remain in or to retire from; if you think to govern the whole world by phrases — defiant phrases periodically produced, now in a dead, now in a living language, and which daily collect around them an increasing flavour of ridicule—I do not know that a struggle unto death may not be nearer than is supposed. But if, on the other hand, your policy is firm and conciliatory, not saying more than you mean to perform, and if you adhere to what you say; if you jealously protect yourself from real injury and insult; if, while requiring respect, you fully respect the rights of others; if you show that you do not covet the lands of others, but throw all the weight of your influence in the European Councils in favour of justice, of freedom, and of peace, I have such confidence in the geographical position, the maritime resources, the accumulated wealth, the free institutions, and the spirit of this people, that I do not believe that it will be the interest or the wish of our neighbours to engage us in a struggle, or that the struggle, if it came, would be a struggle unto death.

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD: My Lords, the noble Earl who has just addressed us has given us a very picturesque description of the rhetorical campaign carried on during the Recess. According to the noble Earl, scarcely a single leading Member of either of the two great Parties in the State has not played a part more or less distinguished in those efforts of eloquence. One alone was wanting, and that was the noble Earl himself; but to-night he has certainly made up for all the deficiencies of the Recess. The noble Earl has shown us that he has been a careful and a brilliant critic throughout the Recess of all those efforts of eloquence that we have heard. The noble Earl has given us an article, a summary, a literary production of no ordinary character, full, I conclude, of plain Whig principles. He has, I think, placed before us in a very able manner—and certainly, all will admit, in a very agreeable manner—some of the sayings of his opponents, mixed up with some of their doings, though hardly introduced into discussion to-night with the usual fairness which distinguishes our debates; for certainly I did not expect we should be called upon to vindicate the negotiations that terminated with the Treaty of Berlin, a subject which has been brought most fully before your Lordships' House before, upon which your Lordships have given your opinion, and in a manner, with numbers present, and with power of debate and discussion, which, I think, should be considered, in this Parliament at least, conclusive as to the judgment which can be formed upon those events. I would not have touched upon that subject now, even in a cursory way, had it not been for two or three authentic anecdotes of the noble Earl's—I will not say invented for the occasion, because I am sure he has some authority for them beyond his own fancy—which I cannot pass over without notice. I will not dwell upon his charge, repeated more than once, that we described the Balkans as "an impregnable bulwark and frontier," when such an epithet was never used, and could not be used, by anyone who had any knowledge of the facts. What was said at the time—and what, I believe, is perfectly justified by circumstances—is that the Balkans were "an intelligible frontier," not "an impregnable frontier," and everyone acquainted with these matters will, I think, agree with that. The noble Earl, in speaking of the Treaty of Berlin, connected it with the Turkish Convention. Accurately speaking, it was not part of the negotiations of Berlin, nor does it appear in the Treaty; but the noble Earl, noticing the guarantee given to the Porte as to Asia Minor, says—

> "It is well known—I believe there is no doubt about it, he says—that it was in consequence of the general discontent that was felt in England, when the results of the Treaty of Berlin were made known, that Her Majesty's Government then had recourse to this Convention in order to distract public attention and obloquy."

Now, if the noble Earl will only look at the date of the Treaty—of the Convention with the Sultan respecting Asia Minor—he will see that that instrument was negotiated and signed before the labours of the Berlin Conference had ceased, or, indeed, I believe, before they had even commenced. The noble Earl says he has often asked questions which have not been answered. I have endeavoured to-night to make a catalogue of his questions, so as to answer them categorically. The noble Earl wishes to know what has been done with regard to the delimitation of Montenegro. Well, that is a business which is not concluded; but I should think that at no time have the prospects of its being concluded in a satisfactory manner been more hopeful than at the present. Upon that point I can speak with some confidence. The noble Earl next wants to know what we have done about Greece. Well, I consider the policy of Her Majesty's Government respecting Greece to be one which, if it were fairly challenged by the noble Earl, we should have no difficulty in defending. But it is very difficult to meet questions which are not preceded by any statement of facts, or by any detailed argument from which you may infer the object of those questions. I do not wish to go into the difficulty respecting the settlement of the Greek Frontier under the Treaty of Berlin; but I may explain that at present the state of the case is this. On the 17th of last month, after long and protracted negotiations, the suggestion made by the French Government, which had been for some time under the notice of the Powers, was brought under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, and in consequence of it we made a proposition which, in our opinion, and in the opinion of others, gives us every reason to hope that the affair may be shortly concluded. That was the 17th of last month. Of course, it is not in my power, at the present time, to go into any detail on the matter. When a proposition is before the Powers, nothing can be more irregular, and no step can be taken that is more calculated to injure the chances of success, than that we should enter into the discussion of the conditions which are matters of diplomatic deliberation. But I do say this—that I look forward with confidence to a settlement of that question; and I am sure that when all the Papers respecting it are placed before Parliament they will be such that no British Minister need be ashamed of laying on the Table of the House. The noble Earl wants information upon the question of the missionary. Now, the question of the missionary is, I hope, not one of such importance as the noble Earl would make it. I hope he will find that the general result is of a satisfactory character. There are Papers to be placed upon the Table which will give the noble Lord all the information he desires. I may take this opportunity of saying that Papers will also be presented forthwith upon the affairs of Central Asia and the settlement of boundaries and other matters under the Treaty of Berlin, which will show that no ordinary pains have been taken, not only by Her Majesty's Government, but by all the signatories to the Treaty of Berlin, to carry into effect arrangements conducive to the maintenance of general peace. The noble Earl then comes to what he calls the unjust and unnecessary war in South Africa, and says he cannot understand how a war can be at the same time unjust and yet necessary. Well, I will not enter into any controversy about words; but the noble Earl seemed to be very dissatisfied with the condition of affairs, and wanted to know whether there was any prospect of this scheme of South African Confederation being carried into effect; and, without entering into any controversy on the question how a war can be just that is unnecessary, I would refer for one moment to the conviction which the noble Earl seems to entertain, that there is no prospect of any scheme of Confederation being carried into effect in South Africa. I will read to the noble Earl a telegram recently received from Sir Bartle Frere, under date January 27. It is as follows:—

> "My Ministers, having considered the subject of your despatch dated the 11th of December, have informed me that they are willing to deal with Griqualand West and Kaffirland. They propose a Conference to draft details for the union of all the South African Colonies—the Cape to be represented by the Governor and six members; Natal, Transvaal, and Griqualand West, each by three; totol number of representatives at Conference, 15. A practical solution of many difficulties is offered by this Minute. To-day's mail takes a despatch on the subject."

I think that telegram is a sufficient answer to the noble Lord so far as South Africa is concerned. Well, then the noble Earl comes to the case of Afghanistan. I must confess to being at a loss to know exactly what the noble Earl wants us to tell him. He addresses to us a question which does not appear to me to be founded upon fact, or to have any character of reality. He assumes certain opinions and imputes them to the Chiefs and Sirdars of Afghanistan. He informs us that the whole country is against us; whereas those who have studied the question on the spot know that only a very limited portion of the population is against us. Then he wants to know what the Government are going to do? Well, that is a question which it is difficult to answer, if only in this sense—that it concerns matters which are in an unfinished state. You must consider the question of Afghanistan first of all with reference to the British Empire, and, secondly, with reference to Afghanistan itself. So far as the relations between this country and Afghanistan are concerned, our policy is perfectly clear. It was adopted after due consideration, and, as we believed, with complete and perfect knowledge, and no mistake has been made in carrying it into effect. It is true that a great disaster has occurred, but to such contingencies human affairs are always subject. As regards Afghanistan, what we aimed at was to secure an adequate and powerful Frontier for our Indian Empire. That we obtained, and we obtained it in a very short time, with brilliant military success; and, having obtained that, we negotiated the Treaty of Gandamak, which described and sealed that policy. It is unnecessary to recall to the notice of noble Lords the terrible circumstances which have for a moment prevented that policy from being carried into effect. No doubt it is possible, in applying the same principles which have always influenced us, that circumstances may occur to alter some details of the scheme which were not contemplated at the outset. But our policy remains the same. It is a policy opposed to annexation—a policy in favour of the people of Afghanistan being governed by their own Chief, or Chiefs—they can decide who these should be—but which, at the same time, retains our powerful and adequate military Frontier. That is our policy so far as England is concerned. As regards Afghanistan, we must be guided by circumstances over which we have not always entire control. It is an error to suppose that Afghanistan, generally speaking, was governed in past times by one individual. On the contrary, the grandfather of Yakoob Khan was, I believe, the first Ruler that collected under his power all the tribes of the country. It may be necessary that we should restore Afghanistan to the state in which it was previous to the accession of Dost Mahomed in that respect. That is possible. The noble Earl does not suppose that we are sitting down with our hands in our pockets all this time. Although we have our English interests first of all to look to — that is to say, the security of our Indian Empire—our next object is to have prosperous, happy, and contented neighbours. Well, we are taking those steps which we think are wise, and which, in our opinion, are the best calculated to bring about the results which we desire. But these are things which cannot be done in a day. You cannot settle them as you would pay a morning visit. If you have got a vast country full of warlike populations, and those populations ready to enter into any engagements provided you meet their particular wishes, it is not always easy to ascertain how far the gratification of those wishes may tend to the tranquillity of the country. If we sanction in any way the position and authority of individuals, we take upon ourselves a great responsibility if we make a choice in which the great body of the people have no confidence. It is a work of labour to bring a country like Afghanistan, in its present state, into a condition of tranquillity and prosperity. But there are in that country all the elements of peace and prosperity, and the noble Earl is labouring under a most erroneous impression in supposing that the great body of the people there are opposed to us. In reality, not one-tenth are opposed to us. I am not talking of those who are merely controlled by our regiments. I am talking of those people who really represent masses—the great Chiefs and the great tribes who have placed themselves in confidential and friendly communication with Her Majesty's Government, and from whose declarations, and a wise calculation of the motives which actuate them, we have a right to infer that they are sincere in their desire to bring about a settlement of the country. I believe such a settlement will be brought about, and that we shall have in Afghanistan a neighbour on whom we can depend, on the whole, for its tranquillity and its desire for commercial intercourse; and that that result will be accomplished totally irrespective of the great object of strengthening our Frontier, while it will be highly favourable to the Afghan people themselves. I now come to another part of the question which the noble Earl has noticed. The noble Earl has alluded to the cruelties imputed to Her Majesty's troops in the course of the war in South Africa. Now, all I can say is, that I have seen no evidence which goes to establish a charge of that kind. I do not believe it. The noble Earl has spoken of the Afghan Memorial which has been submitted to me, and asked—What has been done in consequence? I wish the noble Earl could have quoted the answer I made to that document. With regard to the Memorial, it may be, perhaps, that some noble Lords present are more or less entitled to its paternity. At all events, I can see in it a remarkable similarity to the tone of many remarks on Afghanistan to which I have listened in this House; and I observe that those who sign it are generally familiar names on the subject. There are two Bishops, which I always expect. That Memorial imputes the most criminal and cruel conduct to British soldiers, and my answer to it is this—I ask the Memorialists to give me the documents upon which they found these statements. In no instance have I had any such documents. Here are charges of a most extraordinary kind—charges imputing, I say, to a British General cruelties of a criminal character; but there is not the slightest documentary evidence upon which those accusations are based. The Memorialists speak of something which they had read in newspapers; and I find that they are always ready to give credit to those anonymous statements which favour their own views. In those newspapers there are telegrams from places where, no doubt, the most accurate information could be obtained; but whether the authors of the telegrams ever reached those places seems to me to be matter of great doubt. At all events, not the slightest evidence has reached me to justify any of the charges which have been made. One person accused of having acted with unnecessary cruelty is Sir Frederick

Roberts. Now, I do not know Sir Frederick Roberts, except by his public conduct; and I believe no one can deny that, irrespective of his skill, he has shown himself to be one of the bravest of men personally. As a general rule, I have not found that those who are brave are cruel. I think not. I may add that I mentioned the subject to a person who has a very accurate knowledge of Sir Frederick Roberts's character, and asked him what sort of a man he was, and whether he was a man who would be likely to act in his position with extreme harshness. The reply was—"He is one of the most merciful men." Here is a man with a tremendous military responsibility, who has shown great skill in his profession, although the noble Earl sneers at the march to Cabul. Here is a man of whom we have not the slightest information which would justify a single statement of the Afghan Memorial, and yet this is the manner in which he is treated by his countrymen. Her Majesty's Government have, of course, taken steps to ascertain the truth in this matter; but it is a very disagreeable thing to institute such inquiries with regard to such a man as Sir Frederick Roberts. In making the inquiry I, however, expressed my disbelief in those allegations. I believe the whole affair will turn out to be like other atrocities—it will serve its purpose, be stigmatized and forgotten. My Lords, I will say nothing about the friendship which Her Majesty maintains with other Powers, which I think the noble Earl has professed to doubt, or seemed to consider inconsistent with the declarations in the gracious Speech. I can only say that the language of the gracious Speech is, in my opinion, accurate language, and it is sincere language, both on the part of Her Majesty, and also as expressing the reciprocal feeling of other Powers. I do not know why the noble Earl has taken upon himself to question the sincerity of that declaration. Certainly he referred to some speeches at an election. A new school of rhetoric has been brought into the House. Our old style is quite worn out. We are now called upon to answer what in somewhat barbaric language are termed "extra-Parliamentary utterances," and not to conduct our discussions upon mutual information afforded by sides of the House, and by means of which much misapprehension was prevented. The area under the old system was, no doubt, more limited; but then it was, I think, adequate. But we are now to be called upon to answer persons who are making speeches upon the hustings at elections—

Earl GRANVILLE: A Cabinet Minister.

The Earl of BEACONSFIELD: And the noble Earl questions the language of what must be one of the most solemn documents of public life—the gracious Speech from the Throne—because he says a Cabinet Minister is away, and has spoken in a manner that does not agree with it. If that be so, it appears to me that the noble Earl ought to have drawn the inference that the Cabinet Minister was wrong, and had not acted properly in expressing himself in the manner to which the noble Earl objects. But the noble Earl did not do that. He took the contrary course. He wanted to make out that Her Majesty's Ministers were insincere. Another point which the noble Earl noticed was the measures respecting Ireland. The noble Earl wants to know why we ask for an indemnity; and he said that the Treasury could have obtained the £500,000, or whatever the sum, without violating a solemn Act of Parliament. The noble Earl will, however, see from the Papers which will immediately be laid before Parliament that he has altogether misconceived the position. We are not asking for this indemnity because we violated any Act of Parliament in taking the money. The Act under which we have obtained this money for the relief of Ireland is an Act which gives to the Government power to that effect. There is no violation in taking the money; the violation for which we require the indemnity is that under the Act of Parliament which allows the Ministry to take this money and devote it to Ireland a fixed rate of interest is required, which it would not always be possible to pay; and, therefore, we have availed ourselves of our privilege as Ministers at a moment of crisis like the present, and we have drawn out a certain amount, which we have been obliged by the exigencies of the case to lend at a lower rate of interest than that prescribed by the Act, and we came to Parliament to indemnify us for that. I think, therefore, the noble Earl will find that his labours during all the speeches in the Recess have not furnished him with a catalogue of points which we have not been able to answer. I was glad to hear the noble Earl use the expressions which he did with respect to Irish politics growing unfortunately out of this Irish distress. For the first time for a long while I have the satisfaction of agreeing with the noble Earl in his views; but I was sorry to find, at last, that the noble Earl was ready to suggest a great many changes as possible in the conduct of Irish local business, and so on. It is to be regretted these suggestions were not brought forward at a more favourable time, and at a time less open to be misconceived. It is very easy to talk of the House of Commons and of Parliament generally being overladen with business—to a great degree with Irish business—and that it would be very desirable that a great portion of Irish business should be transacted in Ireland. Well, I should like to know what this business is that is to be transacted in Ireland. It is so easy to say these things; but there is no business which, generally speaking, refers to Ireland which would not equally apply to England. There are the people of York, for instance. Why should they not transact their own business. ["Hear, hear!"] "Hear, hear!" says the noble Earl; but you may so go on until you have no Parliament at all. We should find the noble Earl in a short time coming to this point. Well, what is the present result? Why, it is avowed that there is to be a Parliament in St. Stephen's Green. The noble Earl, who has such intimate information of what is going on at an election that he takes down the words of a Cabinet Minister, knows very well that the Party called the Home Rule Party—that is, the Repeal of the Union Party—have defined their policy to be the revival of the Irish Parliament. The noble Earl will allow me, as he has quoted a Colleague of mine, to quote a Colleague of his, one who, although he displayed great sympathy with the new school, and although he was not prepared to be a Member of the Parliament in St. Stephen's Green—not yet prepared—still did not care how many friends he had who sat upon those benches. I wish to say, whatever may be the result of that election, I trust that England will understand what is the issue at the present moment on this subject. I wish the country to understand that it means nothing else but the dismemberment of the United Kingdom. I do not care where a man sits in this House—whether opposite me, or on my own side—those who favour such a policy are false to their Sovereign and to their country, and will live, I feel confident, soon to regret the responsibility which by their conduct they are incurring.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: There was one declaration of the noble Earl who has just sat down which gave me the greatest possible satisfaction—the solemn declaration of the Prime Minister upon a most grave and solemn occasion that he did not believe the reports respecting the executions at Cabul. But, then, I confess my satisfaction at this declaration was very much qualified when he went on to say that he did not believe in them any more than he believed certain other reports of horrors. He referred, I suppose, to his celebrated speech in the House of Commons in relation to the horrors of Batak, which he ridiculed exactly as he has ridiculed this other matter to-night. It is perfectly true that the horrors of Batak were exaggerated; but I hope the noble Earl was satisfied that 3,000 men, women, and children were murdered in the village of Batak. When he tells us that the executions in Cabul have the same foundation as the murders in Batak, I can only say I hope not. But there was another remark of the noble Earl with reference to these alleged executions at Cabul which I listened to with the utmost astonishment. He said there was no foundation for them, except a few foolish newspaper paragraphs. The noble Earl must have been asleep. He cannot have read the Papers on this subject. Is he not aware that the India Office has published in this country a telegram from the Viceroy giving the Proclamation of General Roberts to the people of Cabul? Does the noble Earl know what the charge against General Roberts is? Does he suppose that we have charged him with going there and instituting a general massacre? No such thing. He is accused of this—and I ask the noble Earl who will speak after me to answer this question—Whether General Roberts has not had shot by his orders men who had been guilty of nothing but the defence of their country? That is the question which I ask. If General Roberts merely shot men whom he had good reasons for believing had act or part in the murder of Sir Louis Cavagnari and his suite, then I admit that he was justified in the act; but if he shot men who had done nothing but oppose the advance of the British troops in the invasion of the country, then I say the act was as infamous a one as was ever committed by the Emperor Napoleon. That is the accusation. I must say I feel indignant at the way the noble Earl has treated the subject. I am not one of those who signed the Memorial. I did not sign it when asked. I said—"I do not know the facts, and I shall wait until Parliament meets to know the facts;" and therefore I did not sign it. But what is this Proclamation of General Roberts? First of all he spoke of those who had act or part in the murder of the English Mission, and then came the reference to those who opposed the advance of the British troops, and the Afghans were told that by opposing that advance they became rebels. Rewards were offered for information leading to the capture of any persons implicated in the attack on the Residency, and similar rewards were offered for those who had fought against the British troops since the 3rd of September. I say that this threat was an infamous thing. These men were defending their country; and do you mean to say that because they did not show obedience to the puppet you had under your care they were therefore rebels? Large rewards were offered for rebel officers of the Afghan Army. The noble Earl tells us—"That is all made up by a few scraps in the newspapers." I beg to tell him, in addition to the telegrams, we have the letters from officers in the Army, correspondents of the Press, who give us much better information than the Government give us. I do not know whether action was equal to the threat; but we have it in evidence that numbers have been shot and hanged for no other crime whatever than that they defended their country, which they had a right to do. I may express satisfaction at another part of the speech of the noble Earl. He was asked—by my noble Friend behind me (Earl Granville)—What is the policy of the Government with regard to Afghanistan?—and he replied that it was a very awkward question to be asked. I have no doubt it is; but he answered it to some extent by saying—"We mean to go back to the principle laid down at Gandamak." My Lords, I am very glad to hear it. I think it is a foolish Treaty and Frontier; but of the various alternatives before you this, perhaps, does the least mischief. But my satisfaction was very much qualified by his saying that the policy of the Government must be governed from time to time by circumstances over which—and then he stopped. He was going to say by "circumstances over which we have no control." Now, what are the circumstances over which they have no control? One of them is the Viceroy. They have no control over him. I believe a great deal has been done by the Viceroy without the sanction of the Government—he is, indeed, the wild elephant which they cannot control. A great many of the violent actions of the Government were due to the fact that they had not been able to keep their Viceroy under control. If we are dependent on the Viceroy we shall not be able to go back to anything like the Treaty of Gandamak. What about the occupation of Candahar? That does not look much like going back to the Treaty of Gandamak. It is much more probable that the policy of the article in *The Nineteenth Century* is the policy to be pursued. Then there is another passage in the noble Earl's speech which I cannot believe—although, of course, I believe perfectly in his sincerity—and that is that we have not met with the hostility of the great bulk of the people of Afghanistan.

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD: Hear, hear!

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: The noble Earl cheers that. But does he know the country as well as Sir Henry Rawlinson? In that article in *The Nineteenth Century* the Chairman of the Political Committee at the India Office tells us, in three or four paragraphs, that we have earned the hatred of the great mass of the people of North and East Afghanistan, the most dangerous and difficult parts of the country. This debate is necessarily desultory, and I do not pretend to enter upon the great question of our policy. I have placed on the Notice Paper to-night a Notice that I shall on this day fortnight, or on Friday, the 20th, call the attention of the House to the consequences which have followed the policy of Her Majesty's Government in the Afghan Question, and I shall then open the whole of that question in a manner which I trust will enable the House more freely and more fully to debate the whole question. Now, my Lords, I should now sit down, if it were not for one paragraph in Her Majesty's most gracious Speech from the Throne, which I cannot let pass without a word of remonstrance—

> "The course of events since the prorogation of Parliament has tended to furnish additional security to the maintenance of European peace, on the principles laid down by the Treaty of Berlin."

Now, my Lords, I believe that statement to be entirely unfounded. I believe the progress of events since the Treaty has been such that we are at present in the greatest possible danger of war—a difficult, a discreditable, and, possibly, a disastrous war, arising out of the provisions of the Treaty. This is a very serious matter, on which I wish to say a few words to-night. My belief in this danger arises from the relations which the Treaty of Berlin bears to the Treaty of Paris. I had my humble share of responsibility for the Treaty of Paris; and I have always contended that by that Treaty the protectorate of the Christian population of Turkey was taken away from the claim of Russia and made over to the European Powers. They undertook by that Treaty a certain protectorate of the subject-populations of Turkey. At one of the Conferences which preceded the signing of the Treaty, Baron Brunnow said he wished one Article modified and extended in favour of the protection of the Christians, and he urged it upon this ground—that his august Master had special and particular reasons for it. The amendment was negatived by all the other Powers. The Representative of England (Lord Cowley) said he could not allow the claim which had been made to pass unnoticed —that of the Emperor of Russia to be the champion of the Christian populations of Turkey—and that England, France, and Austria had equal interest in their protection; and on that the special provision of the Treaty of Paris was made. But there is this difference between the Treaty of Paris and the Treaty of Berlin—the Treaty of Paris provided a means whereby war might be avoided on the execution of that Treaty by prescribing that no one Power should interfere with Turkey unless after a common consultation with all the Powers, and, failing such consultation, each of the Powers had a right of quarrel with Turkey. I quite admit the duty we undertook was vague, and especially the clause of the Treaty relating to the reforms proposed to be executed by Turkey. The doctrine which has been put upon the Treaty by the present Government is that Turkey was intended to be upheld in a particular strategic position. That is a monstrous doctrine, in my opinion an immoral doctrine, and one which is at variance with the whole spirit of the Treaty. It has been said by the noble Viscount opposite (Viscount Cranbrook), that if we had coerced the Turks and a single life had been sacrificed, that would have been murder in the first degree, and he based that opinion on the clause which forbad our interfering in the details of Turkish affairs. That clause had nothing to do with the subject; it was confined to a particular communication made by the Turks, and it did not absolve us from the duty of protecting the subject-populations of Turkey. I want to point out the difference in this respect between the two Treaties. The Treaty of Berlin has gone a great deal further in assuming the protectorate of the Christian populations. No thanks to you for that. Every one of those clauses was taken from the Treaty of San Stefano; they were extracted from the Turk by the Russian Army, and they would never have been extracted by you. Finding them in the Treaty, and not daring to throw them out, you adopted them. The promises are given by Turkey, not to all the Powers, but to each, and there is no provision for common action before Russia or any other Power quarrels with Turkey and goes to war with her. Do you not see the enormous danger to which Europe is exposed? The time at which we may be exposed to war depends upon the Turks. Is there any Member of the Government who believes that the promises of Turkey to reform will be fulfilled? They apply to the whole of Turkey in Europe. They are not vague and general, like the proposals of 1856, but definite and specific. The Treaty of San Stefano provided that the fulfilment of the promises was to be seen to by a Commission; you struck out the words and left the matter in the hands of the Turks, knowing that the promises would then be nugatory. So long as the Turks do not fulfil those promises to Europe, each and every one of the Powers has a standing quarrel with Turkey, and may go to war with her at any moment. In Asiatic Turkey the condition of things is as bad as ever. The promises of the Turks are even more binding than in regard to Europe, and each one of the Powers may call for their fulfilment. The noble Earl spoke of the guarantee we had given on certain conditions; but he did not go on to say what they are. I have heard friends of the Government say that if Turkey does not fulfil her promises our guarantee fails. It would be well if it were so, and no doubt the Government may put any interpretation they like on the Convention. That, however, says the obligation is to depend, not upon the Turks reforming, but on the Turks giving a promise. They have given a promise; you have given your promise; and the Turks are doing nothing. You are bound to defend every bit of that territory from Russian aggression. You know that, in addition to general misgovernment, there is the danger arising from the incursions of the Kurds into Armenia. Russia may say to Turkey—"You promised to maintain order. You promised it to England under a separate Convention. We have nothing to do with that. You promised it to Europe and to us; and unless you keep these people in order we will do it for you; we will take possession of that part of Asia inhabited by the Kurds, and we will keep them in order." What are you to do then? Are you to interfere with Russia? Remember, the secret of your Convention was the wish not to aid the population, that was a secondary object—but it was to keep Russia out of that part of Turkey. You are in this position—Russia has got an Army in the Caucasus of 150,000 men, and you have guaranteed Turkey that she shall not suffer for her breach of promise to you and the rest of Europe. I hope you will give instructions to the illustrious Duke who sits on the cross-benches (the Duke of Cambridge), to double the standing Army of Great Britain—which I have no doubt would be a popular step with many classes in Great Britain—but I do not believe that even that would be sufficient. What are your facilities for conducting these operations? You have a *place d'armes* at Cyprus; but it is ridiculous now to mention the name of that island. What good can it do you? What, then, is the use of the noble Earl telling us that the Treaty of Berlin has been fulfilled? What do you mean? Russia has fulfilled it most loyally and faithfully; Austria and Germany has fulfilled it; but Turkey has not; and I say that under the obligations you have taken to Turkey England may be brought into war at any moment, and from causes over which she has no control. It would be most discreditable and dishonouring in England to defend Turkey with regard to any part of her territory, in the government of which she has failed to carry out the promises which she has given, unless you adopt the principle that, however horrible the government of Turkey may be, however ruinous it may be to the population over which she rules, you are determined in your own interests to maintain her in that position. I believe that is the secret doctrine of your own hearts; but I tell you it is a doctrine that the English people will not stand, and which you have not the power to sustain. I say that the paragraph is most inaccurate, and if it is sincere it is the sincerity of mere thoughtlessness. Neither of these Treaties—the Treaty of Berlin nor the Anglo-Turkish Convention — is really securing peace. I wish to ask the noble Viscount (Viscount Cranbrook) if he approves of the Chairman of Foreign Relations at the India Office publishing a paper which may be translated and sent over all Asia, and with regard to which he may be supposed to be in communication with the Viceroy. ["Oh, oh!"] I am not speaking without reason. Sir Henry Rawlinson has himself published letters written to him by Lord Mayo; and I think it extremely possible that he may be in communication with Lord Lytton. At any rate, the Chairman of Foreign Relations may be supposed to be in communication with Lord Lytton; and I want to ask the noble Viscount if he approves of a man in his position publishing recommendations that the British Government should annex Candahar and Jellalabad, deliver Herat to Persia, and enter into a Treaty of guarantee with Persia against Russia? If that policy is followed, we shall be in a most dangerous position.

THE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND rose to Order. The noble Duke's present course of observation was not fair to Lord Lytton.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: Is the noble Duke aware of this—which I believe to be a fact—that in the course of last year Lord Lytton disapproved so much the policy of the Government that he wrote an elaborate paper, sent it home, and had it distributed among private individual Members of this House? I am told that there is in possession of Members of this House a document recommending measures much more severe and violent with regard to Central Asian politics than those approved of by the Government. This happened when the Government were considering the question of the Ultimatum to Shere Ali. They recommended that another appeal should be made to Shere Ali to see whether he would not give way. The decision of the Government was sent out on the 25th of October. The Cabinet declared that the Viceroy should be instructed to send another appeal to Shere Ali to get him to give way without war. What happened? The message was secret and sent in cipher. The Correspondent of *The Daily News* at Simla got possession of the substance of that telegram. He could not have got it except by communication with the Government of India. ["Oh!"] I do not know who the correspondent was, whether he was Mr. Forbes or not; but the telegraph was employed to raise excitement in India and England against the decision of the Queen's Government. "We are humiliated by the orders which have come from the Cabinet." This was the language of the Correspondent at Simla, not perhaps in the exact words, but in substance. That telegram from the Imperial Government could not have been communicated to the Correspondent of *The Daily News* except by the authority of some Member of the Government of India. In this way an appeal was made from Her Majesty's Government to the passions of the Indian Services, military and civil, which, as Sir John Kaye has said, are always in favour of war. Lord Lytton or his Government was responsible for that betrayal of political confidence.

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: I really must rise to Order. I think the noble Duke is making statements which ought not to be made in this House. I think the statements are not founded upon that just consideration which the noble Duke ought to show to Lord Lytton in this matter.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: Let me tell my noble Friend that if I have made a mistake in anything I have said to-night I shall come down and apologize for it; but I want evidence. I give you my evidence, and you must produce yours. Surely that is a fair bargain? My evidence is this—that in the published Papers presented to Parliament you have the Message to the Indian Government, and that next morning you have the substance of this telegram communicated to *The Daily News*. I do not say it was Lord Lytton who communicated the telegram; but some Member of the Government betrayed the Cabinet. I go farther, and say an appeal was made against the policy of the Queen's Cabinet, and when you had got a temporary heat in the Government of India you cannot be sure that the pacific appeal the Government meant to send to the Ameer was ever given to him. I only say the Members of the Indian Service, although they might be perfectly sincere in thinking the policy of the Government a humiliating policy, had no right to put their own opinion against that of the Government, so as practically to prevent a conciliatory message being given to the Ameer. In these circumstances, I repeat, we have no security whatever for peace, either under the Treaties already concluded or under the negotiations now proceeding.

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK: When the noble Duke told us, at the beginning of his speech, that he had not signed a certain Memorial because he was not acquainted with the facts of the case, I think he would have done exceedingly well if he had made his speech on the same principle, and had not ventured to discredit public servants by guessing about what was the state of their minds. I venture to appeal to those who have occupied any public office in this country whether on any previous occasion anyone who has held the Office of Secretary of State has ventured to impugn the character and conduct of a Governor General of India without having before him the facts on which to found the charge? To guess at the state of mind of the Governor General, to guess that he would disobey the Government at home, to guess that he would bring that Government into discredit by following out a policy which he knew they disapproved, I tell the noble Duke that he forfeits his title to the name of a statesman when he adopts such a course, and is doing a wrong and an injury to a public servant, who is not here to defend himself. I will say more—I say that Lord Lytton has loyally obeyed the expressed wishes of the Government at home; I say that he has in the frankest and most open manner discussed the question of the policy of the present Government; and I should despise a Governor General who did not give the best reasons which he could for the policy which he desired to pursue, and I say that Lord Lytton has gone to the full extent of his duty in following the policy of the Government in every particular. With regard to the Ultimatum of which the noble Duke speaks, it is perfectly true that the Government of this country did desire to delay the war, and, if possible, to avoid the necessity of war, with Shere Ali. They did not rush hastily into war, but were anxious to give him the fullest time for consideration. But when, after the fullest consideration on the part of the Government, the Ultimatum was sent to Lord Lytton, without a moment's hesitation he obeyed it. And am I to be told that, because *The Daily News* Correspondent by some intrigue, or some means of which I know nothing, became acquainted with the substance of the telegram sent to Lord Lytton, it being obtained by the representative of a newspaper not in their interests—am I to be told that those who immediately took steps to carry out faithfully the policy of the Government have betrayed their duty by striving to raise public opinion in India against the Government? My Lords, such charges are utterly unworthy of the noble Duke. I should be the last man to say anything of the noble Duke behind his back which I would not say before his face; and I suppose the noble Duke would respect his opponents and treat them with fairness, and not impute to them discreditable conduct without such distinct evidence as would claim the consideration of your Lordships' House. The noble Duke has been told that Lord Lytton did so and so; but he does not give the name of his correspondent or informant. If I were to get up here and state, in the noble Duke's absence abroad or elsewhere, I had been told the noble Duke had done so and so, without any more certain knowledge of the facts, I should be ashamed of myself. When the noble Duke makes charges against a public servant, who is in a distant part of the world, it is a point of honour that he should formulate those charges, and give due notice of them and enable the person accused to meet them. I will come now to other points to which the noble Duke has referred. In the first place, an imputation has been made as if I had something to do with articles published by Members of the Council of India. When I took Office as Secretary of State for India, what did I find? I found that Members of the Council had written publicly in their own names on this question of Eastern policy. Sir Henry Rawlinson, as everybody knows, had published a large book on this subject with the knowledge of the Secretary of State. Under these circumstances, I felt myself precluded fram interfering. I do not hesitate to tell the noble Duke what I think on this subject, as he has asked for my opinion. I think it is a very great pity that Members of the Council of India should have entered in that way into discussions on political subjects connected with the India Department; but, as is perfectly well known, they have been allowed to do so, and the thing has not been confined to Sir Henry Rawlinson. Now, with respect to Sir Henry Rawlinson's article, I have not read it. Sir Henry Rawlinson asked me whether I would wish to see it in proof, and I said —"Certainly not. It is your affair, not mine." I thought I was not entitled to interfere in the matter. The Council of India hold an extremely peculiar position; they are not exactly like ordinary public servants. They hold an independent position; and I do not see how it is possible to control them any more in their writings than in their conversations. I felt that I was not authorized to interfere; and I did not think it would be consistent with my duty or with the dignity of the position I held that I should attempt to interfere where I had no authority. It will not be necessary for me, therefore, to enter into anything stated by Sir Henry Rawlinson, because I am in no sense responsible. But, to the best of my belief, Sir Henry Rawlinson has not been in communication with the Viceroy on this subject, and I consider it impossible that such a thing could have taken place without my knowledge. I come now to another point. Strong language has been used, imputing to General Roberts conduct of which I am quite sure he will be found to be entirely innocent.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: I referred to his own Proclamation.

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK: I think that when the noble Duke comes to see the Proclamation as it was really sent forth, he will find that it is of a rather different character from what he has supposed—that the expressions used and the measures adopted are not so strong as he seems now to think. I am not going now into the case of General Roberts, because when these charges were made against him he was called upon to state what he had to say for himself on the subject; and his reply not having yet been received, I think I should be doing him a grave injustice if I were to undertake his defence in any manner differing from that which he himself might adopt. The noble Duke has said that General Roberts has shot men who had been only guilty of defending their country. But I affirm upon statements received, not from General Roberts himself, but from others, that not one single man has been so shot. I have been shown private letters from gentlemen of the highest position and acquainted with the circumstances, stating that, in their opinion, if General Roberts had erred, he had erred on the side of mercy. I say nothing myself. I only wish the House now to see that there are two sides to the question, and I ask them to suspend their judgment until General Roberts has given us his own defence. As this is the first opportunity which I have had of speaking recently with regard to Afghanistan—for I am not one of those Members of the Cabinet to whom the noble Earl (Earl Granville) alluded as having spoken a good deal during the Recess—let me say that I have had the advantage of reading private letters from Sir Louis Cavagnari and Lieutenant Hamilton, which have given me the highest opinion of their ability and character as Representatives of the Queen in Afghanistan; and I take this opportunity of saying that I feel that the country has sustained a very great loss in their death. The noble Duke must acknowledge that we have a solemn responsibility thrown on us by what has occurred in Afghanistan. There are those in Afghanistan who, to a certain extent, have sacrificed their position in order to help us. It is impossible that we should desert them or give them up to enemies who might wreak vengeance on them. But I think it is quite within our power, without adding essentially to our territory or to the charge of our territory, that such measures should be taken as will put us in a position to protect our friends. Considering that we are dealing with savage and barbarous tribes who are given to plundering, it is not improbable that we may have difficulties yet to encounter in Afghanistan; but there is no desire on our part to take any step which is not just and fair to that country. I feel confident that the Generals who lead our Army will not use their power unjustly against men who, from a sense of duty, have fought for their country; and I feel confident, also, that that has not been done hitherto. I now pass from Afghanistan to the remarks made by the noble Duke as to the Treaty of Berlin. And here I will say I am sorry my noble Friend (the Marquess of Salisbury), who is so much better qualified to speak on the subject than I am, is absent. The noble Duke appears to me, first of all, to put a strictly technical interpretation on the Treaty, and then to impute to us that we are trying to put upon it a new interpretation which was never put before. With regard to the Convention into which we entered with Turkey, I stated on another occasion, and in "another place," that that Convention is a conditional Convention, and it is not merely on the condition of making promises, but of fulfilling promises, that it exists. The noble Duke wishes us to say what we think Turkey will or will not do; but, in my opinion, our business is to induce her to do what is for her best interests. I do not despair that under legitimate pressure she may be made to redeem her promises, and may see it to be for her interest to act up to what she has undertaken. I object altogether to taking the line which the noble Duke wishes us to take. He quotes hypothetical cases, and wants me to say what I should do if certain things occurred. Let the things occur, and then I will tell him what I will do; but until they have occurred, the matter must be left in that *limbo* of uncertainty to which all future events belong. The noble Duke may, however, rest perfectly confident that, in accordance with the desire expressed in the Speech of Her Majesty, the Government will do all that is in their power to give due effect to the Treaty of Berlin, and to maintain the peace of the world.

Address *agreed to, nemine dissentiente,* and ordered to be presented to Her Majesty by the Lords with White Staves.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

The Earl of REDESDALE appointed, *nemine dissentiente,* to take the Chair in all Committees of this House for this Session.

COMMITTEE FOR PRIVILEGES — Appointed.

SUB-COMMITTEE FOR THE JOURNALS—Appointed.

APPEAL COMMITTEE—Appointed.

House adjourned at a quarter past Nine o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter before Five o'clock.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 5th February, 1880.

The House met at half after One of the clock.

Message to attend Her Majesty;—

The House went;—and having returned;—

NEW WRITS DURING THE RECESS.

Mr. SPEAKER acquainted the House,—that he had issued Warrants for *New Writs, for* Elgin and Nairn Counties, *v.* Honble. Alexander William Duff, commonly called Viscount Macduff, now Earl of Fife, called up to the House of Peers; *for* Sheffield Borough, *v.* Right honble. John Arthur Roebuck, deceased; *for* Liverpool Borough, *v.* John Torr, esquire, deceased; *for* Donegal County, *v.* William Wilson, esquire, deceased.

PRIVILEGES.

Ordered, That a Committee of Privileges be appointed.

OUTLAWRIES BILL.

Bill "for the more effectual preventing Clandestine Outlawries," read the first time; to be read a second time.

NEW MEMBERS SWORN.

Sir George Macpherson Grant, baronet, *for* Elgin and Nairn Counties; Thomas Lea, esquire, *for* Donegal County.

NEW WRITS ISSUED.

For Barnstaple Borough, *v.* Samuel Danks Waddy, esquire, Chiltern Hundreds; *for* Southwark Borough, *v.* John Locke, esquire, deceased.

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH FROM THE THRONE.

MR. SPEAKER *reported* Her Majesty's Speech, made by Her Chancellor, and read it to the House.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.

COLONEL DRUMMOND-MORAY, in rising to move the Address in reply to Her Majesty's gracious Speech from the Throne, said: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I feel that in undertaking so onerous and yet so honourable a task as the one before me, I must appeal to the House to grant me, to the fullest extent, that generous forbearance which it has always shown to those in a similar position. Sir, when we contrast the present state of the Eastern Question with its condition at this time last year, I venture to think it bears a very favourable comparison. The Treaty of Berlin has been successfully carried out. Russian troops no longer occupy Turkish territory. Russia is no longer at the gates of Adrianople, as she probably would have been if the original Bulgaria, as defined by the Treaty of San Stefano, had been allowed to remain as a Province. And Bulgaria itself, reduced to half the size proposed by Russia, has been pushed back behind the Balkans—the passes of which mountains the Turks have a right to seize and occupy in the event of Russian aggression. Besides this, Austria holds a position not only of great military but of great administrative importance in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was said at first that success would never attend the efforts of Austria to administer these Turkish Provinces on the principles of Western civilization, and that Bosnia would always resist her troops; yet what is the state of affairs there now? We see now that perfect tranquillity reigns in that country, and that religious equality has been established. Farming of the tithes has been abolished, and this, together with all taxes, are collected regularly and at stated times. The result is that the burden of taxation is not nearly so much felt as formerly, and it is the belief of persons well qualified to form an opinion that before long that Province will be able to pay its own way. I admit that Turkey has been slow to begin any reforms; but we must remember that the habits of a country are not to be changed at once, that the official class is naturally against all reforms, and that it is only within the last year or two that the necessity for reform has been insisted upon. Besides, Turkey has only just emerged from a long and disastrous war, she has no available money, and she has no longer that credit amongst other nations which she once had, and which she has so unfortunately wasted. But as Austria has been successful in Bosnia, we may hope that Turkey, with such an example before her, may yet see that security for property, justice in taxation, and improved means in communication, would be the basis for a lasting and prosperous future. The closing act of last Session was a discussion on the Treaty recently concluded by this country with the Ameer of Afghanistan. At that time Sir Louis Cavagnari, appointed under the provisions of that Treaty to be Her Majesty's Representative at the capital of that country, at the express desire and under the especial guarantee of the Ameer, had arrived at Cabul, and had been received with all the honour due to his position. Within a month, we received the lamentable tidings that he and all his Staff had been treacherously massacred. Whatever may be our opinion as to the policy of that Treaty, and of the war, we must, I am sure, all join in lamenting the death of one of the most distinguished and able of our Indian officials; and we must all feel that another act of gallantry has been added to the already long list that the history of our Indian Empire contains when we recall to our memories the brave defence made by our Envoy and his devoted followers against an overwhelming crowd of treacherous Afghans. I may even go further and say, with universal assent, that when an Envoy of Great Britain and his Staff has been cruelly and treacherously murdered, the only course that could possibly be adopted was that of vindicating the dignity of this country and dealing prompt justice for the crime that had been committed. Fortunately for us, the arrangements that had been made under the Treaty of Gandamak greatly facilitated our action, for, whilst hopeful as to the permanence of our relations with Yakoob Khan, the Government of India had rendered its position substantially independent against all accident by securing the permanent command of the main roads and passes from India into Afghanistan. When, therefore, it became necessary to move upon Candahar and Cabul the advanced positions which we held on the Frontier proved of the most material assistance, and fully justified the selection which had been made. Since then, Sir Frederick Roberts has had to contend with difficulties which have required all his skill as a general to meet, and I venture to think that this House must feel that it was fully justified in the eulogium which it has already passed upon him, showing its high appreciation of the manner in which his duty has been discharged, and of the valour and devotion displayed by all his troops, both British and Native, who have been engaged in that campaign. Nor should we fail to acknowledge the peaceful conduct of affairs in South Afghanistan under the guidance of Sir Donald Stewart, who has shown himself to be not only a gallant soldier but also an able administrator. Sir, Her Majesty, in Her Gracious Speech, informs us that the military occupation of the country still continues to be a necessity; but we must all hope that the time will soon arrive when further military operations may be suspended, and that the people of Afghanistan will be satisfied that we have no desire to annex their country or to unduly interfere with them; but, whilst securing our Frontier and our own legitimate influence, our desire is to live on friendly terms with them in future. There is no part of our recent proceedings which, I think, we may all agree in looking upon with more satisfaction than the system of Frontier railways, which has been commenced. Not only will they be of inestimable advantage from a military point of view, by improving our means of communication, but they will also, it may be hoped, at no distant period, lead to the development of commercial intercourse, which will, of itself, be the best means of extending our influence and the blessings of peace and civilization. The Zulu War is, we may trust, both now and for ever a thing of the past. We none of us can forget the news of a year ago of the melancholy catastrophe of Isandlana, and the gallant defence of Rorke's Drift. We cannot forget how the Government, although the war was in no way begun by their direction or with their consent, sent out large re-inforcements with such praiseworthy celerity that in a few short months the campaign was brought to a close by the decisive victory of Ulundi—a victory most glorious in itself, for our foes, although termed naked savages, were greatly superior to us in point of numbers, and were probably the bravest enemy that had ever fought against the troops of Great Britain. There must naturally be some difficulty for a time with the Transvaal and with the Confederation of all the South African States; but we may indulge in the hope that now South Africa, as a whole, is relieved from its imminent danger of aggression from an artificially great, but most dangerous military State, she will be enabled to carry out her undoubted future of defending herself without aid from this country. With respect to Home affairs, much as we may regret, yet we cannot hide the fact from ourselves, that a great and widespread depression is now felt throughout the agricultural community of Great Britain. In some districts it may be more deeply felt than in others; but through the length and breadth of the country, from the largest and most experienced farmers to the smallest holders of land, all have suffered more or less severely. I venture to think that it is not very difficult to trace the causes of this depression. We know what the harvests of the last few years have been. In 1879, owing to the long-continued wet and cold, the harvest was deficient both in quality and quantity, and in some districts it is no exaggeration to say that there was no harvest at all. In 1878, the harvest, although not so deficient in quantity, was far from what it ought to have been in quality. In 1877, in 1876, and in 1875, we find that the harvest was in each year more or less deficient. But it has not only been against bad harvests that the British farmer has had to contend. He has had also to contend against bad prices, prices the lowness of which has been brought about by the stagnation in trade, coupled with an almost unlimited importation of grain and cattle from abroad—prices which have made it well-nigh impossible for our farmers to work their land at anything but a loss to themselves. During last Session a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the whole cause of Agricultural Distress, and to see how far it might be possible for us to try and prevent such a catastrophe from again occurring. That this Commission could in itself alleviate the distress, I am sure that neither my hon. Friend who moved that it should be appointed (Mr. Chaplin), or any of his warmest supporters, ever for a moment supposed; but when, as at the present time, all sorts of reasons for this distress are given and all sorts of remedies are proposed, the Commission, by inquiring fully into the matter, may prove most useful as a means to an end whereby, if it lies in our power, we may discover how to guard ourselves in the future. But, Sir, besides the reasons which I have given for the present state of agricultural affairs, many, I know, lay the blame upon the Land Laws, and maintain that if they were in some cases abolished, and in other cases greatly altered or modified, we should never again be liable to a crisis such as that which we are now passing through. They say all our distress is due to the Laws of Entail and Primogeniture—to the large size of estates, to the restrictions of cropping; and they maintain that so long as the land is not their own farmers will not be able to farm for their own profit. Others, again, contend that peasant proprietorship is the real panacea for all our evils—in short, that our land system has practically broken down. I am not here either to condemn or defend our Land Laws. If it be clearly and conclusively proved that they are a stumbling-block and a hindrance to the progress of agriculture, doing harm alike to landlord and tenant, then I feel sure that no sensible man would, for one moment, object to such alterations being made in them as might seem best. And it is upon matters like these that I believe a Commission, such as that which has been appointed, may make a most useful and instructive Report, from the powers that it possesses of collecting evidence from all parts of the United Kingdom and from men of all shades of opinion. Regrets have been expressed that there are not a greater number of small proprietors, and that the number of yeomen, or, as they are called in Cumberland, statesmen, is rapidly diminishing. I think all will agree with me that it is a great pity such should be the case; but with respect to the former class, if we take Scotland—and I suppose in England it is much the same—if we make an investigation, we shall find that there are many lairds owning properties of fair size as to average, but poor in the quality of the soil—with all the surroundings to make home charming, yet without the means of keeping it up, who have found it be more profitable to sell their properties, yielding only 3 per cent with a large yearly expenditure, to some wealthy man from Edinburgh or Glasgow, and to invest the money thus obtained in securities which, without any annual expense, will bring them in a return of 4 per cent or more. In the same way, we shall find that the yeomen or statesmen prefer to sell their land, and with the proceeds of the sale rent a farm from some large proprietor. Although the classes I have mentioned are not so numerous as formerly, yet there is in England a district in which, at the present time, a large proportion of small freeholders exist. I refer to that part of Lincolnshire which lies between the banks of the Humber and the sea coast. These freeholders have bought their land, partly with their own savings and partly with money which they have borrowed. They inhabit a large and fertile tract of country—there are no resident landlords, no woods, and no game. Now, if it can be shown that these freeholders are in bad times better off than the surrounding tenant farmers, then, doubtless, there is good ground for saying that there is something wrong in our system of landlords and tenants. But if, on the other hand, it can be shown that in bad times many of these freeholders, farming for their own profit, cannot improve their land—paying no rent cannot pay the interest on the money they have borrowed—cropping their land as seems to them best yet growing less than formerly—if it is shown that, holding their own small holdings, unfettered by any laws of entail or primogeniture, they are not only worse off than the tenant farmers, but are not even so well off, in many cases, as the hired labourer, although they both work and fare harder than he does—then I think we may fairly assume that there are other causes to account for the prevalence of agricultural distress besides the Land Laws, and that a system of peasant proprietors will not meet the case. For my own part, whilst I quite recognize the fact that there may be some useful alterations made in the Land Laws, yet I trust that in the course of this and the following years we shall find the real remedy for the agricultural distress in the shape of good harvests and revived trade. But, Sir, much as we may regret the distress that exists in England and Scotland, our sympathies must be still more deeply roused by the sad state of things in the West of Ireland. There the farmer seldom knows prosperity even in fair seasons, and his usual struggle to obtain a livelihood becomes, after a season like the last, a struggle against absolute famine. We can only hope that, by means of the liberal contributions now being raised in this and in other countries, by the exertions of the resident landlords, by the issue of food and fuel as ordered by the Government wherever it may be necessary, and by the loans offered by it at a nominal rate of interest, this lamentable calamity may yet be averted. Her Majesty has announced in Her Gracious Speech that two measures of great importance—namely, the Criminal Code Bill and the Bankruptcy Bill, will be submitted to our notice. I trust that the House will give its fullest consideration to these measures, and assist Her Majesty's Government in passing them during the course of this Session. Now, Sir, at the conclusion of my task, which I feel that I have but ill-fulfilled, I beg to thank the House for the extreme kindness with which it has listened to my remarks. I beg to move—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty to thank Her Majesty for the Most Gracious Speech which Her Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament:

"Humbly to thank Her Majesty for informing us that Her relations with all the Powers continue to be friendly, and that the course of events since the prorogation of Parliament has tended to furnish additional security for the maintenance of European Peace on the principles laid down by the Treaty of Berlin, although much remains to be done to repair the disorder with which the late War has affected many parts of the Turkish Empire:

"To thank Her Majesty for informing us that a Convention for the Suppression of the Slave Trade has been concluded between Her Majesty's Government and that of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan:

"Humbly to thank Her Majesty for informing us of the hope expressed by Her Majesty at the close of last Session that the Treaty of Gundamak had happily terminated the War in Afghanistan; and that, in conformity with its provisions, Her Majesty's Envoy, with his retinue, was honourably received and entertained by the Ameer of Cabul:

"To thank Her Majesty for informing us that, while engaged in the exercise of their duty, Her Majesty's Envoy and those connected with the Embassy were treacherously attacked by overwhelming numbers, and, after an heroic defence, almost all massacred:

"Humbly to thank Her Majesty for informing us that so intolerable an outrage called for condign chastisement, and that Her Majesty's Troops, who, pursuant to the stipulations of the Treaty, had withdrawn or were withdrawing from the territories governed by the Ameer, were ordered to retrace their steps:

"To thank Her Majesty for informing us of the skill exhibited by the officers and men of Her Majesty's British and Native Forces in the rapid march upon Cabul, and on other lines of action, and of the high credit thereby reflected upon those Forces whose bravery has shone with its wonted lustre in every collision with the enemy:

"Humbly to thank Her Majesty for informing us that the abdication of the Ameer and the unsettled condition of the Country render the recall of Her Troops impossible for the present; but that the principle on which Her Majesty's Government has hitherto acted remains unchanged, and that, whilst determined to make the frontiers of Her Indian Empire strong, Her Majesty desires to entertain friendly relations alike with those who may rule in Afghanistan and with the People of that Country:

"To thank Her Majesty for informing us that Her anticipations as to the early establishment of peace in South Africa have been fulfilled, and that the capture and deposition of the Zulu King, and the breaking up of the military organization on which his dynasty was based, have relieved Her Majesty's possessions in that part of the world from a danger which seriously impeded their advancement and consolidation:

"Humbly to thank Her Majesty for informing us that a native outbreak in Basutoland of considerable importance has been effectually quelled by Her Colonial Forces, while the Transvaal has been freed from the depredations of a powerful Chief, who, having successfully resisted the former Government of that Country, had persistently rejected all attempts at conciliation:

"To thank Her Majesty for informing us that Her Majesty has reason to hope that the time is now approaching when an important advance may be made towards the establishment of an Union or Confederation under which the powers of self-government, already enjoyed by the inhabitants of the Cape Colony, may be extended to Her Subjects in other parts of South Africa: and to thank Her Majesty for informing us that Papers on these and other matters will be laid before us:

"Humbly to thank Her Majesty for directing the Estimates of the year to be prepared and presented to us without delay:

"Humbly to thank Her Majesty for informing us that the Commission issued at the close of the Session to inquire into the causes of Agricultural Depression throughout the United Kingdom is pursuing its labours:

"To thank Her Majesty for informing us of the special precautions which Her Majesty's Government have deemed it necessary to take in view of the threatened distress in Ireland, and of the measures which the course they have adopted will render necessary:

"Humbly to assure Her Majesty that our careful consideration shall be given to such measures as may be submitted to us, and that we earnestly trust that the blessing of the Almighty may attend and direct our labours."

Mr. J. P. CORRY: Sir, I rise to second the Motion of my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Perthshire (Colonel Drummond-Moray), and in doing so, I feel that it is not necessary for me to ask the indulgence of the House if, as an Irishman and one who has the honour of being one of the Representatives of the largest and most self-reliant constituency in Ireland, that I should first of all refer specially to that part of Her Majesty's most gracious Speech which relates to the present state of matters in that country, and what is to be submitted to Parliament in reference thereto. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has already given Notice that he will ask leave to-morrow to bring in a Bill to give effect to the views of the Government, which, I think, shows that they are not indifferent to the matter. When my hon. Friend the Member for Downpatrick (Mr. Mulholland) in 1876 occupied the position I have now the honour of filling, he congratulated the House on the omission from Her Majesty's Speech of any reference to the affairs of Ireland, and he did so on the ground that the country was so peaceable and prosperous that it was not requisite in any reference to the state of the country to separate it from the other parts of the United Kingdom. I am sure no one regrets more deeply than Her Majesty that the same state of matters does not exist at present. Sir, there are not many subjects about which we can all agree; but I think I may safely venture the statement, that few will be found to dispute, that we have in these countries, for the past four or five years, been passing through a period of great—I would almost say exceptionally great—commercial and agricultural depression, and that Ireland being the poorest country it has been more seriously felt there than in either England or Scotland. But even at the risk of giving offence to some of my countrymen, and of even being contradicted, I feel bound to tell the House and the country that, in my opinion, the distress in Ireland is not so general as one would be led to expect from the way it is being written and spoken about in some quarters. I admit to the fullest extent, and deeply deplore, that in some districts of the country, especially that lying along the Atlantic Ocean, there is very great distress, and, as far as I can learn, and I have taken some trouble to inquire, I believe that in some parts it arises quite as much from a scarcity of fuel as it does from a scarcity of food. But, Sir, what is the history of these very localities, even in the most prosperous times? Why, that there is a considerable amount of poverty and hand-to-mouth existence amongst the people, and one of the causes which gives rise to that state of matters is over-population. What is it that has happened? It is this. A farm was originally let to a tenant, by-and-bye his family increases and it becomes divided between him and one or two of his sons, and in order that the sub-division may not come under the notice of the landlord or his agent, the rent continues to be paid by one, whilst it is made up by two or three, and hence the farm that could have supported one family has two or three living on its production. What is more, the seed, especially of the potato, has not been changed for 30 years. The only remedy for such a state of matters is emigration. This, however, is a cure which I am aware is not popular in some quarters. This is so for many obvious reasons. One, no doubt, is that agitators find it better to have a multitude of half-starved ignorant people who will be led by them, and through whose clamour they may get up an excitement, and, if possible, goad whatever Government may be in power to pass measures which are not for the welfare or prosperity of the entire community. With regard to the Province of Ulster, I can speak confidently; and I assert, without fear of contradiction, that at present, with the exception of the coast line of Donegal, that the state of matters are on the whole better than they were this time last year, and in those districts where manufacturing industries are carried on they are very much better indeed. As to the staple trade of Ulster, I venture to say it has not been for years in so prosperous a condition as at present, and that there is every hope of its continuance. Our mills and looms are in full operation, and everyone knows that when that is the case employment is plentiful. There is no doubt that the improvement of the trade in the North of Ireland has arisen from the undoubted improvement which began to show itself in the United States in the beginning of last year, and which reached us in October. One of the greatest wants in the other Provinces of Ireland is manufacturing industries; but can it be wondered that no one has confidence enough to start anything of the kind? Unless there is security, no sane man would risk his capital in a country where it would be liable to be rendered worthless at any moment by such an agitation as has been sweeping over the greater part of Ireland for the repudiation of just liabilities. Why, Sir, it is the old story. Agitation is the curse of my unfortunate country. To the question, Why is capital not attracted to Ireland, when so much of it is seeking investment?—the answer is undoubtedly what I have given. One bubble has scarcely time to burst until another of greater dimensions, and possibly, as I believe in the present case, of more dangerous materials, is being blown. It is difficult for an Irishman, who has a deep and, perhaps, a much deeper interest in the welfare of his country than the so-called patriots, to read with any degree of patience the inflammatory, and I will say in many cases disloyal, language which is addressed to his excitable and possibly uneducated countrymen. We are being constantly told that the chief cause of all the distress and discontent which exists in Ireland arises from the want of having an Irish Parliament meeting in College Green. Why, Sir, the prosperity of Ulster since the Union has been as great as that of almost any other part of the United Kingdom, and we, Sir, who live there most certainly do not want to go backwards. In Ulster we understand Home Rule to mean Repeal of the Union, and I am satisfied that 99 out of every 100 who call themselves Home Rulers mean by it nothing short of that. Most of us, no doubt, have read the letter of the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition (the Marquess of Hartington) to the hon. Member for Liverpool (Mr. Rathbone), who sits behind him, with reference to the pledge which the noble Lord who is at present contesting that borough in the Liberal interest has given to the Home Rulers to secure their support. I think we in this House, and the country generally, would be glad to learn from the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition more definitely than is expressed in that letter what his views are on the Home Rule Question, which, I say, means Repeal of the Union. No doubt, the noble Lord does say that he could not see his way to give the pledge Lord Ramsay has done; but, at the same time, he goes on to say that he has no pretension to dictate to an independent candidate, and that the noble Lord has his warmest sympathy and cordial wishes for his success. Is the language of the noble Lord to be interpreted by Liberal candidates for Parliamentary seats to mean that they may give similar pledges to that Lord Ramsay has given whenever there is a considerable Home Rule vote? If so, and a number of the noble Lord's supporters in the next Parliament come in pledged to vote for this very innocent inquiry, I wonder what Lobby he will find himself in? We all remember what happened last Session on the Army Discipline and Regulation Bill. The noble Lord expressed very strong views as to the flogging clauses; but owing to the pressure of the hon. Member for Birmingham who sits below the Gangway, and those who were acting with him, the noble Lord felt himself compelled to change his front; and I believe I am correct in saying that he actually moved a Resolution to abolish flogging in the Army. On that occasion it looked to me as if the noble Lord was being driven instead of leading, and what has happened before may happen again. I therefore think we should have from the noble Lord a declaration more explicit than he has yet given with reference to the whole matter. Perhaps I may here be allowed to say that I read with great interest a letter which the hon. Member for York wrote to my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland. I hope the suggestions contained in it will receive the earnest attention of the Government, as I am satisfied that a further extension of the Provisional Order system would be found in many local matters of great advantage to England and Scotland as well as to Ireland. Ulster, in many respects, is not so favourably situated as the other Provinces, and yet everyone who visits Ireland is struck with the difference which is observable in the thrift and comfort of its inhabitants from the other parts of

Ireland. The borough which my respected Colleague and myself have the honour of representing comprises about the 24th part of the entire population, and if all Ireland were to follow its example the Government would not have much trouble in providing for exceptional times of distress. I recollect very well the Famine of 1847, and how in many parts of Ulster the distress that did exist over and above that which was provided for by the Poor Law was locally met, and, in addition, large contributions were given to help the distress in other parts of the country. Sir, those who have been taking the lead in the recent and present agitation boast that the result of it has been a general reduction of rents; and had it not been for them no effort would have been made, either by the Government or private individuals, to meet the exceptional state of matters which I have already admitted exists chiefly on the sea-coast. That I most emphatically deny. I am aware that the noble Duke who so worthily represents Her Majesty in Ireland, and those associated with him in its government, did not wait for any pressure to be put upon them; for so soon as it was feared, from the unfavourable state of the weather, that there might be a deficient harvest, instructions were at once given for accurate and reliable information to be collected and supplied to them, especially from those localities which were likely to suffer most; and it is well known that early in November the Local Government of Ireland issued a Circular offering loans for drainage and other works, which would enable landlords and town commissions to give employment; but for some reason very few availed themselves of the offer. The cry of the agitators was, and still is, that the Government undertake reproductive works. Yes, Sir, another of our great curses in Ireland is the want of self-reliance. So soon as any pressure comes, the Government is called on to do what you in England and Scotland do for yourselves, and also what we in Ulster do. What has been done by the Government since November? Of course they acted as wise men, with the facts of the case before them, and knowing what took place after the famine of 1847, when money was wasted to an enormous extent. They have been acting through the constitutional and legitimate channels; and I have no doubt, from the reports of the action of landlords, town and harbour commissions, and others, that there will be a larger expenditure of money in useful, and, I hope, in most cases, of reproductive improvements. As we have been informed by Her Majesty's most gracious Speech, in making such arrangements the Government has exceeded its powers, and Parliament will be asked to pass a Bill of Indemnity, which I cannot imagine will occupy much time or give rise to any difference of opinion. In speaking on the question of land, I feel that I can do so without the prejudices of either a landlord—as in the ordinary acceptation of the term I am not one, owning no agricultural land—or that of a tenant farmer. Everyone is aware that after the Famine of 1847 the Encumbered Estates Court was established, which brought into the market very large estates, which were broken up or sold to parties who had the money, not only to invest in the land, but also to spend on its improvement. That is what has been going on ever since—now under the Landed Estates Court to a greater or less extent, and more recently under the Church Temporalities Commissions; so that it is idle to say that land in Ireland has not been accessible to all who had the desire to acquire and money to invest in it. I am free to say that I am one of those who consider that the transfer of land might be made less tedious and less expensive; and, for myself, I can see no objection to an extension to the Landed Estates Court, or the same system of sales as has been adopted by the Church Temporalities Commissions. At the same time, I would have it most strictly and safely guarded, so as to prevent abuses. I am told on very good authority that of some of the properties which were held by the Church Commission, and which have been sold to the tenants, only the good farms have been sold, and that the inferior ones are still on their hands, and that the probability is that what is called the Church Surplus will be greatly reduced by a much lower price having to be taken for the unsold lots. Besides, I believe there is no doubt but that, in not a few instances, those who have purchased are in arrear of their annual payments; indeed, very reliable authority has been furnished on that point by the

Secretary to the Church Commission, who states that, out of a total sum of £132,800 receivable in 1879 for land instalments and interest of mortgages, the arrears on the 31st December last was £7,450. I would ask, what is the amount likely to be on the 31st December, 1880? From another source we learn that out of 41 parties who purchased holdings, or rather seemed to do so, in 28 cases the conveyances were made out in the name of another person. These facts do not point with any great satisfaction to the great panacea which has been insisted on for all the evils of Ireland—namely, that of getting rid of the landlords and the establishment of peasant proprietors. I have no objection to see an increase of peasant proprietors; but it must be carried out without any compulsion or violent changes. I hold the opinion that a very long time would not elapse before there would be large proprietors again. I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without expressing my high appreciation of the praiseworthy and disinterested work which that noble lady the Duchess of Marlborough, who has all the instincts of her noble family, which we in the North of Ireland are so proud of, undertook in starting a Relief Fund to aid those special cases of distress which employment nor any other means of assistance was likely to reach, and the hearty response which has been given to her appeal by the Lord Mayor and citizens of London and other places in England and Scotland. So soon as the anti-rent agitation was started, bankers and those who had money lent in the country got frightened, and at once an order went forth to stop all further advances and collect as much as possible of outstanding debts. Especially as soon as the passing of the Land Act of 1870, all over the country a class of money lenders has started into existence who have been lending money on most usurious terms. What takes place is—a farmer wants £10 or £20 for a month to make up his rent. He obtains it from the money lender to whom he is to refund £21 for the £20 borrowed, and if it is not forthcoming at the end of the month he pays £1 and the loan continues on the same terms, so that if it runs over 12 months the moderate rate of 60 per cent would be paid for the loan. No one knows better than my hon. Friend the Member for county Cork (Mr. Shaw), who is chairman of a prosperous and well-managed bank whose business is chiefly in the South and West of Ireland, that what I am stating is correct. I was told on very good authority that a bank in Ireland, which has a large business amongst the farming class, had lately as many as 100 processes at one quarter sessions; and I must say I was more than astonished when I read a speech of my hon. Friend the Member for county Cork, in which he is reported to have said that there was in Ireland a national antipathy to a bailiff and process-server; that he felt it himself when he saw one of those fellows prowling about the country—he felt inclined to take the linchpin out of the wheel of the car. When I read it, I looked back to see if it was not the utterance of some less responsible person, knowing the usual moderation of the hon. Member, and the way in which he addresses himself to any question he undertakes to bring before this House; and I cannot think how he can allow his name to be associated with such teaching. His words will be treasured up by those who will not scruple to use them in a literal sense, and by others who will find it convenient to repudiate all sorts of contracts. It was not from the landlords that the pressure first came, but from those parties I have been referring to. The poor deluded people have been told in the most emphatic way to pay the shopkeepers, and those whom they want again. The most prominent, no doubt, are the money lenders; but the landlords are either not to be paid at all, or, if so, only what the tenant considers a fair rent. I have no doubt but amongst those who have been active in denouncing the landlords and landlordism are those very money lenders, and who will not be amongst those who will make any abatement in their demands. I ask, can it be wondered at that, after such teaching as that we are all now familiar with, there should be an outbreak of lawlessness? And I greatly fear we have not seen the end of what has been smouldering for some time. Sir, after what has been said, and so well said, by my hon. and gallant Friend on the other topics referred to in Her Majesty's Speech, it is not my intention to dwell at any length on them. But I cannot allow the opportunity to pass without saying that, when it is insisted on by right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite, and their friends outside, that the Government are responsible for the South African War, which has been successfully terminated, and which I hope will be the last this country will ever be engaged in, in my judgment nothing could be farther from the truth. The Government has given abundant proof in the Papers which have been submitted to Parliament that they did everything they could to prevent such a calamity; but when it was forced on them they acted with that decision which is characteristic of Englishmen, and of Irishmen, too, as in the settlement which has taken place a distinguished Irishman played an important part. I, of course, refer to Sir Garnet Wolseley. I wonder what right hon. Gentlemen opposite would have done had they been in Office? Would they have recalled the troops that were already in the country, or would they have sent out additional ones? I am sure that they would have acted precisely as the Government did, and in that they would have been sustained by the Conservative Party. But how has the great Liberal Party acted during all this anxious time? Why, everything that possibly could be said and done to weaken the hands of the Government; but with what effect they know best themselves. With reference to what has taken place in Afghanistan, can it be possible, no matter how blind some people wish to be, that anyone can doubt but that Russia had been for some time intriguing with Shere Ali, and that the time had arrived when it was necessary for the Indian Government to see that it did not go too far? And as soon as it was decided to test the matter, and the Embassy which we were sending was turned back, the cry of the Liberal Party was—"What else could be expected, seeing that there was such a display of force accompanying the Embassy?" And then, recently, it was—"That the Government are greatly to blame for having such an insufficient force in Cabul to protect the late lamented Sir Louis Cavagnari." No matter what is done, we are told on very high authority that it is done in a stupid and blundering manner; and until the present Government is displaced, and the enlightened Government who occupy the front Opposition Bench—or as many of them as will remain after the next General Election are in their places—nothing will be right; not even the weather. Sir, I do not hesitate to put the question—How was the honour and interests of this great Empire upheld during the late Administration, and how have they been under the present one? Why, it was then said that the British Lion was asleep, and that the country occupied the position of a second-rate Power, if even that. Is that the language that is held now either in this country or abroad? This House has over and over again given the answer, reflecting, as I believe, the voice of the country. I must say that I cannot see the policy of the Liberal Party placing in the fore-front of their attack the question of the foreign policy of the Government. It is, however, an issue which I am sure Gentlemen sitting on this side of the House, and also our friends outside, are quite ready to meet them on. We cannot object to their plan of reuniting the divided sections of their Party, and they have my best wishes for the failure of this experiment. Recently, a storm of words swept over a section of Scotland, and I believe that the country which my hon. and gallant Friend the Mover of this Address represents came in for a share of it. At the moment the noise was so terrific, that all outside the charmed circle who had been instrumental in raising it expected that everything which in any shape stood in its way would be uprooted and never be heard of again; but, greatly to their surprise, when it passed over, and the atmosphere cleared, there was no damage done, but instead, everything was more staple and secure than before. I believe, Sir, that when matters are settled in Afghanistan, as indicated in the Queen's Speech, we will have a North-West Frontier to our Indian Empire so impregnable that the peace and prosperity of the country will be secured for a very long time. Those who have listened to or read the speeches of the hon. and learned Member for Oxford during the Recess must have been amazed at his coolness and powers of assertion; and when we consider, and that on his own authority, that to his other unquestionably great gifts he has added that of being a prophet, and not even content with that, but also that he claims to have the only true interpretation of his own prophecies, it must be gratifying to his friends. In my humble judgment, it would be strange if the interpretation did not fit into the prophecy; but I think it will be found, now that the hon. and learned Member has come to the place where his statements can be challenged, that it will turn out that his prophecies will prove to be the creation of a strongly imaginative brain, and that if the hon. and learned Member wished hereafter to be remembered as the Prophet of Oxford, it would be with the epithet which I leave others to supply. I had intended, as a mercantile man, to have said something on the financial question, but I have already detained the House too long; and being a subject which will engage the attention of those much more competent to deal with it, I will only say now that as the tide of improved trade has undoubtedly set in the hopes of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer may revive also, and that if not this year, when next year's Financial Statement comes to be made—as I fully expect that he will occupy the same seat after the General Election—he will be able to say that the Revenue has again begun its leaps and bounds, and that it is not the case, as our opponents have been telling us and the country, that only during the period of a Liberal Administration being in power is there prosperity in the country. Certainly, during the late Government's lease of power, the progress and prosperity of the country were very great; but, as is the case after every such period of excitement, there comes a time of depression, and it fell to the lot of the present Government to come into Office just as the wave of prosperity which had been flowing over the country began to recede. I conclude by thanking the House for the very great patience with which it has listened to me, and I certainly would not have undertaken the duty which I have so imperfectly discharged had I not felt that, in being selected to perform it, the honour was as much owing to the constituency I have the honour of representing as to any merits of my own.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, &c." [See p. 69.]

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON: It is usually the duty, and a very agreeable duty it is, of a Member of the Opposition to rise at the conclusion of the speeches of the Mover and the Seconder of the Address to pay a tribute, if he be able to do so, to the manner in which the task of moving and seconding the Address has been discharged by those who have undertaken it.

MR. O'CONNOR POWER: I rise at the request of my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) to a point of Order, and to inquire whether, Notice of an Amendment to the Address having been given at an early stage of the proceedings, he is not entitled, according to the usual practice of this House, to move his Amendment before the noble Lord, or anyone else, shall have the opportunity of speaking.

MR. SPEAKER: The noble Lord rose in his place and caught my eye, and I accordingly called upon him to address the House. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw), no doubt, at an earlier part of the evening, did give Notice of his intention to move an Amendment to the Address; but no Amendment stands upon the Notice Paper in his name, and, even if it did, that would not give him a right of precedence over the noble Lord.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON: I was saying that it was with the greatest pleasure that I rose on this occasion to discharge that usual duty as far as regards the hon. and gallant Member who moved the Address, who did so with perfect tact and temper, and with great ability. But I must say that I do feel called upon to make some protest against the manner in which the hon. Member who seconded the Address considered it proper to discharge the duty he had undertaken. On an occasion when it is usually considered that topics of difference should be avoided as much as possible, and when it is the desire of a great portion of the House that we should join together in an unanimous Address to Her Majesty, it does not seem calculated to promote harmony in our proceedings, or to improve the temper and spirit with which we are entering upon our labours of the Session, if the hon. Member who is charged with the important duty of seconding the Address takes the opportunity of delivering a carefully prepared—I may say a carefully written—speech in which he attacks everyone who has been unfortunate enough during the past few months to fall under his displeasure. The Members of the late Government, especially the right hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr. Gladstone), the hon. Member for the county of Cork (Mr. Shaw), and many other persons, have been referred to by the hon. Member in terms of considerable severity, although I am not aware that the conduct either of myself or of any of the hon. Members whom I have mentioned was referred to in Her Majesty's Speech. The hon. Member, therefore, seems to me to have travelled somewhat beyond the usual bounds in making these attacks upon so many persons whose conduct does not appear to be immediately in question at this moment. To revert, however, to the main subject before us, I think that a great many Members of this House must have felt somewhat surprised to find that we were summoned to assist Her Majesty's Government in the conduct of affairs during the present Session. This Parliament has existed for a time which exceeds the ordinary duration of Parliaments, and if its existence continues for two or three months longer it will have existed for a longer time than any other Parliament is recorded to have existed during the present century. I think that there is good reason why the ordinary practice, which is that Parliaments should not continue to transact public business up to the very extreme limit of their existence, should have been allowed to prevail on the present occasion. As long as a seat in this House is, and I hope it will long continue to be, an object of ambition and desire, it is extremely natural and inevitable that as the end of Parliament approaches some of the discussions and proceedings will be more or less biassed by the wish of Members to do that which is agreeable to their constituents, and not in all cases what is for the best interests of the nation. I think that is an influence which cannot be, under any circumstances, without some effect. I do not say that there may not be circumstances in which this consideration may be disregarded; but I do think that, in the present instance, any special circumstances which exist would rather be in favour of making an earlier appeal to the country than in favour of prolonging the existence of Parliament. It cannot be denied that since the election of this Parliament events of the greatest importance have taken place. It cannot be denied that those events were entirely unforeseen by the electors at the time that this Parliament assembled. The course which the Government has taken in regard to these events—I am not now saying whether that course was right or wrong—was a course which elicited great difference of opinion in the country. It was repeatedly challenged in this House, and it is a matter of fact that the course which has been taken does not command the approval of what is, at all events, a considerable part of the constituencies. Under these circumstances, and considering that Parliament is throughout supposed to act upon the authority derived from the immediate sanction of the constituencies of the country, there exists a strong reason in favour of an earlier appeal to the country in order to ascertain whether the policy which the Government has pursued, and which we have so frequently attacked, really commands the sympathy of the country. It would have given greater authority to the decisions of the Government and Parliament. Our deliberations, whatever may be done by the Government and Parliament in this Session, must be done in a certain sense of uncertainty as to the opinions of the country; and I do not hesitate to express my opinion that the interests of the country had been better served had Her Majesty's Advisers recommended a dissolution of Parliament this Session. I am not going to enter at length upon a discussion of foreign policy. As time goes on the day must inevitably come when the appeal must be made to the country. We, and those acting with us, will be ready, and claim the right, and feel ourselves bound to put before the country many of those protests we have ineffectually made in this House. We shall claim the right of once more examining the foreign policy pursued by Her Majesty's Government. We shall endeavour to examine it as to its reasons and results, as to its justice and morality, the consequences which resulted from it, as they affect the honour and best interests of the country. I shall not on this occasion travel beyond the limit of those questions which appear to be naturally appropriate; and therefore I shall only ask Her Majesty's Government for some information upon those transactions which they have recently been engaged in, and which appear to affect the interests of the country. First I would ask the Government whether they are able to give the House any information as the position of the negotiations with regard to the rectification of the Greek Frontier? We believe that, in consequence of the action of the Turkish Government, those negotiations have been completely broken off. It would not be very easy to overrate the importance to the people of Europe of the vexed question between the Greek and Turkish States. The Greeks are an active and ambitious people. They command, to a great extent, the sympathy of the Powers of Western Europe, although, perhaps, they have not found any protector so powerful or zealous as that which championed the cause of the Slav people. It may be asked, what has Greece done to entitle her to make any such claims? We are reminded that if the Kingdom of Greece had not observed the neutrality recommended to her by the Powers of Europe, Turkey, hard pressed on land, but powerful on sea, would have been able to inflict severe punishment on her. That may be so; nevertheless, I believe that the sympathy which Greece commands in a very large part of Europe is so strong that European public opinion would not have allowed that chastisement should have been inflicted by Turkey on Greece. I believe, further, that if the Greek Question again breaks forth —as it inevitably will, if these questions are not settled, and before long — the sympathy of Europe will not permit the Turks to inflict punishment upon Greece. I believe—although we do not hear so much of it now as of matters going on in other places—this Greek Question is a sore in the side of Turkey as dangerous to her as any other wounds inflicted on her lately. I believe it is for the interest of the Turkish Government itself that this question in which Europe has expressed a strong desire should be settled. A few weeks ago the usual assurance could scarcely have been given us that Her Majesty's Government was "on friendly terms with all the other Powers." We were informed a few months ago that, in consequence of the persistent refusal of the Turkish Government to initiate any of those reforms which had been promised, and in consequence of its disregarding the remonstrances of our Ambassador, the British Fleet was about to be sent to Constantinople, for the purpose of extorting from the Sultan an acquiescence to our demands. And, still later, in consequence of a dispute between the British Ambassador and the Turkish Government, in reference to a missionary and a Turkish subject, and the alleged neglect by the Turkish Government of promises made as to religious toleration, we were informed that diplomatic relations with the Porte had been suspended. I presume that on this subject Her Majesty's Government will lay Papers before us, and until we have those Papers I have no desire to go into the details of the business. What I now want broadly to point out is, that I feel some doubt as to whether acts of single interference like these are likely to be productive of any useful result. There is no doubt bitter disappointment existing in the Turkish capital as to the small amount of sympathy and support which the Government of this country accorded to Turkey during the war, and bitter disappointment at the policy of withholding any material assistance since the war. The English alliance is openly disparaged by men of power and influence in Constantinople; I am not aware that it is very greatly supported by any. There are not wanting Powers ready to suggest that it would be more to the interest of the Turkish Government to look to other quarters than England for advice and support, or, at any rate, to prevent vexatious interference. Indeed, it seems to me extremely possible that separate and single interference in the affairs of Turkey may, without being productive of any good, lead us into very awkward complications. But I only wish to point out now that these complications seem to be the inevitable result of the Convention we entered into with Turkey a year or two ago. The fruits of that Convention are now becoming evident. They are partially recorded in a Blue Book presented to Parliament during the Recess. What do we find in that Book? We find Reports from Consuls and Vice Consuls, and some from Her Majesty's Ambassador, all telling us the same story of the misgovernment in the Asiatic Provinces of Turkey —the misgovernment, or want of government at best, to secure to its subjects the blessings of peace, liberty, and security. Constant remonstrances, we find, are made upon these subjects by the Consuls and Ambassador. The answer is always the same, and that is to the effect that the allegations are admitted, that reforms cost money, that the Turks have no money, and that it was impossible, therefore, to comply with the demands of Her Majesty's Government. There are one or two extracts from that document which appear to me to bear out the statement I make. The first is an extract from a verbal Note presented to the Porte by Sir Henry Layard—

"It would unhappily appear that the only authority now existing in those districts to which Her Majesty's Ambassador has referred is that of Turkish Agas and Beys, who exercise it in plundering, outraging, and oppressing the unfortunate Christians under their rule."

The next extract is the following:—

"His Excellency added that he was scarcely surprised to hear of the excesses committed by the Circassians, as these people, having been hunted out of Europe, and having been deprived of all they possessed, had been sent into Asia without any provision having been made for their maintenance and support. The consequence naturally was that they were compelled to starve or to rob, and they not unnaturally chose the latter alternative."

Another account is very much to the same effect. On the 23rd of June, Sir Henry Layard wrote—

"I must do both Kaireddin Pasha and Carathéodory Pasha the justice to say that they fully admitted that my complaints were well founded. His Highness said that he was prepared to commence at once with the special reforms to which I had referred, not in one, but in three of the Asiatic vilayets. He had already made them a matter of study. There was still the same want of money, which was a most serious obstacle to the introduction of some essential reforms, such as the organization of the gendarmerie; but he was engaged in studying a financial scheme which, if carried out as he hoped it would be, would afford the necessary means to the Porte."

Well, these extracts might easily be multiplied from the Blue Book. They disclose a sad state of things in any circumstances; but there would, in ordinary circumstances, be no reason why such a state of things should reflect any discredit on this country or impose any special responsibility upon us. But, unfortunately, since the Convention of the 4th of June the case is otherwise. We have by that instrument undertaken a serious responsibility in these matters. Had we been free from that engagement our duty might have been very well discharged by the constant remonstrances which Sir Henry Layard made; our responsibility might, perhaps, have been discharged by the emphatic protest which the Blue Book shows Sir Henry Layard to have made. Sir Henry Layard said—

"Unless the Porte takes care and acts with wisdom and foresight it will some day have an Armenian question in Asia similar to the Bulgarian question in Europe, which led to the late war. The same intrigues are now being carried on in Asia Minor to establish an Armenian nationality, and to bring about a state of things which may give rise to a Christian outcry and European interference. I have warned the Turkish Ministers over and over again that unless they hasten to carry out the stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin with respect to the Armenians and the Convention of the 4th of June, and to take the measures which are absolutely required for the protection of the Christians and for the better government of the Asiatic Provinces of Turkey, they will find out, when it is too late, that the Sultan may be in danger of losing some of them altogether."

But the state of things is this—that that inevitable result which Sir Henry Layard predicts cannot now come to pass until after either the resistance of England has been overcome, or until England has abandoned the solemn guarantee which she gave. We have guaranteed to Turkey the possession of those ill-governed and distressed Provinces, and we have accepted a consideration for that guarantee. We have accepted, not the reforms made by the Turkish Government, but the promise of reform; and the worthlessness of that promise, the incapacity of the Turks to fulfil it, does not relieve us in honour from the obligation of the guarantee we have undertaken. We have accepted, under the Anglo-Turkish Agreement, another consideration, which is equally worthless with that Turkish promise. We have accepted the occupation and the garrisoning of Cyprus; and we cannot repudiate our engagement without restoring that island to its rightful owner. That is a specimen of the results of the foreign policy which, I cannot help thinking, has been framed more for Party purposes and for home consumption. We have not increased by one iota our power of interference or of action for any good end, if we thought it necessary, and we have incurred the discredit of a partnership such as I have described, and we have incurred that discredit for the present wretched state of things which we desire to remedy, and which we are bound to remedy. Perhaps the Government will inform us what has been the result of the interference to which I have alluded? What was the result of the negotiations which, as we understand, led to the appointment of Baker Pasha to supervise reforms in Asia Minor? Will the Government inform us whether Baker Pasha has any authority not only to supervise reforms, but to institute them? Will they inform us what are the means which he has at his disposal for instituting reforms? Well, we were informed a short time ago, in a manner somewhat strange, that an alliance of the greatest importance to the interests of this country had been concluded. The German and Austrian Alliance was announced at a Party meeting by the noble Lord the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, not as a matter of which he had any positive knowledge—he had heard of it by common report—but it was, he said, a message of "glad tidings for peace." We are entitled to ask now whether these glad tidings are true or not? Has the noble Lord discovered whether this Alliance has been concluded? What is its nature; for what object has it been concluded? And does he still believe that it promises all these inestimable blessings which he seemed to expect from it while it was in a hypothetical state? In my opinion, it is very easy to exaggerate the importance of that Alliance, as I think it was easy to exaggerate the importance of the Triple and Imperial Alliance of which we heard so much. For myself, I am far from disparaging its value, and, certainly, if it can calm the susceptible nerves of Her Majesty's Government—if it leads them to believe, as we always have endeavoured to contend, that the duty of maintaining the independence of Europe, of preserving the balance of power in the Mediterranean, and of repressing the ambitious advances of Russia in South-Eastern Europe, does not solely and entirely rest on their shoulders—if it induces the Government to adopt that which I think is a more reasonable view of the case, then it is of great importance. No doubt Alliances and understandings between Sovereigns and statesmen—the Triple Alliance to which I have referred, and the more recent Alliance—may have a great effect in influencing and guiding policy; but no Alliance, however close, can have more than a temporary effect, if it is not based on the true and permanent interests of the countries concerned. I believe that even the Governments of Russia, of Germany, and of Austria, autocratic as they are, cannot afford to disregard the material interests or the wishes and feelings of the people of their respective countries. But if we desire to know what are the interests and the wishes of those countries, we must look to the feelings of the people as well as to the words and promises of their Sovereigns and Ministers. It is not the interest of those countries to permit Russian aggrandizement in Europe at the expense of Turkey. That is the view that we have always maintained. And I believe that, however much it may suit our vanity to imagine that the Treaty of Berlin was entirely our work, other Powers more closely interested and more directly concerned had more to do with that settlement than has been supposed. The noble Lord seemed to think the agreement of Germany and Austria was to a great extent directed at the repression of the independent Nationalities on the Danube; but that would be a short-sighted policy for us to follow. For myself, I do not know whether or not Austria may feel that she has a temporary interest in repressing their growth; but Germany has no interest in repressing them, nor do I believe that her policy will be directed to that end. I think it would also be very short-sighted on our part if we committed ourselves to any Alliance or to any policy which would prevent us from giving our free and full support to the independence—the growing independence—of those Nationalities. They are the heirs—and I believe they will be the heirs—of the Turkish Empire in that part of the world; and I do not know of any duty or other consideration which calls upon us to join in any proceeding directed against their independence. The message of peace to which I have referred has had, it must be acknowledged, a somewhat singular inauguration. One of the Powers—parties to that Treaty—has recently thought it necessary to prepare for a very great augmentation of her ordinary enormous military establishment. It is often said that we on this side of the House are indifferent to European politics. It appears to me that it is Her Majesty's Government and hon. Gentlemen opposite who are sometimes indifferent to what is passing in the world excepting in a certain quarter of Europe, and in the deserts and among the mountains of Central Asia. How can any statesman look at the present condition of Europe as a whole without alarm? At no time have we ever seen Europe so completely armed as at the present moment. At no time were the military forces of the great European States so fully organized as they are now. At no time has so large a proportion of the proceeds of industry been diverted from peaceful objects. It is impossible not to see that it is this state of things which is the chief cause of the anxiety that prevails everywhere throughout all Europe. In Russia the strain is almost greater than it is possible for her to bear, and the condition of affairs is such that not a few statesmen think and believe it is impossible that Russia can escape either domestic convulsion or a European war. Germany has followed on the same lines. The measures she has been compelled to take against social disturbance have been the effect of her enormous military force. France has borne the burden, apparently, with less strain than other Powers; but things change rapidly in France, and it would be unwise to count upon the continuance of the present state of things in that country. Under such circumstances, it seems to me it would be prudent to look well to our own security. I do not think it is necessary, I do not believe it is desirable, that we should join in this race of enormous armaments. But in such a state of things as this, when a storm is hanging over Europe—and no one can tell where or when it may burst —if the Government were to come down and say that, in their opinion, the naval power and superiority of this nation ought to be maintained, I, for one, should hesitate in criticizing such a statement and opposing those demands. I say that our position is this, and the state of Europe is this, that we ought to concentrate our resources, and limit, instead of extending, our responsibilities. But this is not the course we have pursued. In every quarter of the world we have undertaken fresh responsibilities. Her Majesty's Speech refers to the conclusion of the war in South Africa; but it ignores the chief subject of difficulty in that part of the world. We have, no doubt, deposed the Zulu King and broken the military power of the Zulu nation. I do not now discuss the settlement of Zululand or consider whether it is hopeful for the maintenance of peace or not; but, undoubtedly, the chief difficulty in South Africa is the condition of the Transvaal, to which no reference has been made in Her Majesty's Speech. I believe that Papers on this subject are promised. I am not going to state at this time my opinion as to the policy which ought to be pursued there. I will only say that it is perfectly clear now that the annexation of the Transvaal was a measure adopted by the Government and sanctioned by the House under wrong impressions and under incorrect information. We were informed that a large majority of the European settlers and inhabitants of the Transvaal were in favour of that annexation. It is now proved conclusively that a large majority, at all events, of the Boers are bitterly against it. We are now told that the annexation was rendered necessary because we could not permit the foreign policy of the Government of the Transvaal in their dealings with the Natives; but we have been ourselves compelled to adopt almost precisely the same line of policy which was adopted by the Boers; and, under these two circumstances, I say it ought not to be considered a settled question, simply from the fact that the annexation had taken place. If it had been necessary for the peace of the community of South Africa that the Transvaal should devolve upon us, by all means let that be proved; but if, on the other hand, we find it would be more honourable to restore the Government, I say that no false sense of our dignity being involved in the question ought to stand in the way. Our true dignity would be best consulted by acknowledging that we have made a mistake, if, indeed, it is found that a mistake has been made, and restoring the Government of the Transvaal. As to Afghanistan, Her Majesty's Speech contains no statement of the policy of Her Majesty's Government. It contains some references to what has taken place; but it does not contain that which every Party in the country is now looking for, and men of all shades of opinion are asking for—a clear and distinct declaration from the Government of what their future policy in Afghanistan is to be. I will not pretend for a moment that any explanation which the Government can give can be satisfactory to us, because I do not believe they can announce any future policy which will not leave our relations with Afghanistan in a far worse condition than they were before the war. I will not now go into the question we debated last Session, as to the justice of the war. I want only to look at the policy which dictated the war, and at that alone. I do not suppose the Government will deny that the war was the result of a settled policy. It can hardly be maintained that it was the result of an unforeseen disagreement between ourselves and the Ameer, of circumstances over which we had no control, and which left us no alternative but to fight for our honour and interest. The Government scarcely concealed, although they used the usual phrases of regret at having to resort to arms, their satisfaction at the course of events which had given an opportunity of placing our relations with Afghanistan on what they considered a footing so much more satisfactory, and, indeed, the only satisfactory basis. They exulted in the acquisitions gained at the conclusion of the Treaty of Gandamak. They exulted at the influence that Treaty had enabled them to obtain over the foreign relations of Afghanistan. They laughed at the apprehensions which had been expressed. They pointed to the realization of their anticipations. They did not conceal their triumph over Russian intrigue, and referred to the despatches which announced the conclusion of the Treaty of Gandamak as not only the record of military operations conducted to a successful conclusion and an honourable peace, but as the record of a successful and triumphant policy. What was that policy? I will set aside the acquisition of territory, the military value of which I will not discuss now, but as to which I imagine there must be considerable doubt. Having acquired some portion of Afghan territory, the idea of that policy was that Afghanistan, as a more or less perfectly organized State, would be placed, with regard to its foreign relations, on the same footing as other organized States, and that these relations would be so influenced by us that, as was expressly said, "our enemies should be their enemies, and our friends their friends." That was the policy supposed to be brought to successful conclusion by the Treaty of Gandamak. And what remains of it? As soon as it was put to the test, as soon as we used the first privilege we had acquired under that Treaty, we found the Sovereign with whom we had concluded it a fugitive in our camp, and everything in the form of government in the country utterly disappeared. We found that, so far from having the acquiescence of the people in our influence, we were confronted by an enormous mass of the armed population, and were driven for several days to defend ourselves in our encampment. At this moment we have another campaign to undertake before we can even begin to consider what is to be done in the future. Well, we are now told that it is impossible to withdraw the troops from Afghanistan under present circumstances; but the House and the country will expect to be informed as to the policy Her Majesty's Government intend to adopt when those military operations have been brought to a successful conclusion. It is useless to go on helplessly repeating, as it appears to me the Government are disposed to do, that they adhere to their old policy. I have endeavoured to show that that policy is gone. The State of Afghanistan does not exist; our old policy was formed on the basis that such a State did exist, and before it is possible to say you adhere to the lines of the old policy, you have to undertake the task of re-constituting the State of Afghanistan, of reforming its government, and of placing a Ruler upon its throne. Our former experience is not in favour of adopting the task of placing and supporting a Ruler over the Kingdom of Afghanistan. We have had experience of that, and it is an experience that Parliament will not, I think, be desirous of repeating. But if we refrain from that undertaking, what then? We shall leave Afghanistan in a state of utter anarchy. Even if the idea be adopted of breaking up the country into various provinces, under the command of more or less independent Chiefs, it leaves the country to the certainty of intestine warfare; and what possible foreign policy is there in a State organized in that manner, or what influence can we have? There is another question upon which this House will be desirous of having some information as early as possible. This House and the country have seen with very great regret reports of military executions on a very large scale at the time of the occupation of Cabul by our troops. I should be the last to desire to impute any needless cruelty or severity to any British officer, believing, as I do, that the feeling of every officer in the British Army is entirely opposed to anything of that nature. I do not wish, therefore, to express any opinion whatever upon these reports until the receipt of further information. But I think that some information should be given as early as possible as to the number of persons who have been executed, and as to their offences. The earliest information should also be given as to the Proclamation that was issued threatening to treat and punish as rebels all persons who opposed the advance of the British troops on the march to Cabul, and incited the people to rebellion. I think it would be a most strange thing to stigmatize as a rebel any Afghan in arms against Yakoob Khan, whose authority had never been firmly established. But even if he had been more a *de facto* Sovereign than he was ever proved to be, I do not know upon what ground the English troops were to be made the executioners of those who might dispute his authority. Nor do I know what object of policy was served by that Proclamation. I do not at present, as I observed before, want to express any opinion upon this subject; but I hold that the Government of India were far more responsible for this Proclamation, and the action taken upon it, than the military authorities. Those authorities were in constant telegraphic communication; and whatever may be the facts as to what was committed in Cabul, I shall be disposed to hold that it is the Indian Government, and not the military authorities, whom this House ought to hold responsible for what has taken place. I regret very much that the time of Parliament must be so fully occupied during the present Session with this and kindred questions, for it is well known that this protracted Parliament has left to its concluding Session very large arrears of legislation, and not only are there these large arrears of legislation, but the state of affairs at home is one which will call for very careful and full consideration. We all see with pleasure and satisfaction the long-hoped-for revival of trade and industry; but, unfortunately, the Revenue, which suffered last year from the depressed state of trade, has not answered the expectations of the Government, who based their calculations upon an earlier revival of trade than we have experienced. I am afraid, therefore, that the financial proposals of the Government are not likely to be very satisfactory, and that they are likely to occupy a good deal of the time of Parliament. The Government's financial policy has been one of postponement—a policy which could only be justified by a hope of better times. It will be a severe disappointment to many industries in this country if, at this moment, the hopes of revived prosperity should be checked in consequence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling upon the country to make additional sacrifices to meet the additional responsibilities thrown upon him. But, Sir, I am afraid that from the lists of reviving interests must be excepted the agricultural interest. I am afraid a heavier depression than that from which it suffered last year still weighs it down. I do not suppose that in a Parliament, which contains so many Representatives of the agricultural interest, such confidence will be felt in the Royal Commission that has been appointed, that we shall not be called upon from time to time to discuss the causes of the depression. In fact, Notice has already been given to-night by an hon. Member that the attention of Parliament will be called to the subject. I may, therefore, reserve any observations which I may have to make upon the condition of the agricultural interest to another opportunity. Before I sit down, I cannot help saying a few words upon the position of Ireland. As Notice has been given of a formal Amendment to the Address on the subject of Ireland, there will be full opportunity for discussion, and it will not be necessary that I should say as much as I otherwise would. I fear that the present distressed state of the agricultural interest has caused much suffering, inconvenience, and loss of comfort in England; but I fear that in some districts in Ireland it has reached such a point that the actual means of subsistence are, I am afraid, wanting to a large number of the population. The Government, I am sure, will be anxious to take the earliest opportunity of stating what steps they have taken for the purpose of meeting the present state of things. The Government have had ample warning from a very early period of the autumn. They were warned by many Members of Parliament, representing Irish constituencies, as to what might be anticipated. The Government in Ireland have every source of information at their disposal. They have the whole organization of the Local Government Board to refer to, and they can also obtain information from registrars, magistrates, the Royal Constabulary, and other Government officials. They have, in fact, every means for ascertaining with the greatest possible accuracy the condition of Ireland at any moment. They have, no doubt, received Reports from all those sources; and what the House will desire to know is, what action has been taken upon the Reports that have been made, and, above all, whether that action has been taken in time? As far as we are aware, the chief steps hitherto taken by the Government have been an extension of the system under which the Board of Works is authorized to make loans to the landed proprietary for works of improvement. I do not deny that this may be the best means of meeting the present state of things where the system is applicable; but a doubt arises whether it is applicable everywhere. When a famine was apprehended in the cotton districts of Lancashire some years ago, for the purpose of providing employment for the people, it was determined that advances should be made not only to private individuals, but also to local municipal bodies. I have not heard that any such provision has been made by the Irish Government for enabling local bodies to obtain loans with which to undertake works. If this step has been taken, it has, at all events, been taken very recently. What I say the Government will have to do is to show that such steps have been taken, and in time. I think that everything depends upon the time at which the measures were taken, for works of this sort cannot be undertaken immediately, or they may turn out unwise. There is another point upon which the House will probably desire to have some information. The laws regulating the relief of the poor in Ireland are much more severe than those which regulate the same subject in England. In ordinary times I believe the practice of the Poor Law relief in Ireland is admirable, and that it is administered at least as well as in most parts of England, if not better; but I think it becomes a question whether, in times of exceptional depression, some power ought not to be given to the Local Government Board to moderate the stringency of the Poor Law relief rules. With regard to out-door relief, it seems hard that when the crops almost entirely fail the people should be driven to surrender, not only their present holdings, but have to go into the workhouse. I shall be glad to know what measures have been taken by the Government, or what measures they contemplate taking, for alleviating this state of things. I need not say I have seen with very great regret and pain the agitation taking place in Ireland last autumn. It was one not for the protection of the smaller occupiers, who were unable on account of the pressure of the times to pay their rent, to protect them from harsh and cruel evictions, but one, it appears to me, directed to the object of establishing different relations from those existing at present between landlord and occupier. It was an agitation which advocated as a means to that end what was, practically, repudiation of contract. This was the advice given by the leaders of that agitation. It appears to me that our minds ought not to be distracted from the question of the distress in Ireland by any feeling which may be raised in our minds by that agitation. Looking to the character of the advice given, I think that it has been a subject of astonishment, not that that advice has been taken to the extent to which it has been taken, but that it has not been taken to a very much larger extent. I know very well that there are still many matters affecting the prosperity of Ireland which this Parliament will and ought to be called upon to deal with. We have endeavoured, generally in vain, on many occasions during this Parliament to alter laws which, in our opinion, press hardly and unjustly upon the people of Ireland. We have endeavoured to assist them in obtaining perfect equality of laws and institutions as compared with this country, and I do not think we ought to be diverted by anything that has happened, by any agitation that has arisen, from that endeavour. But I cannot help feeling that one of the greatest causes which depress and weigh against the prosperity of Ireland is the absence of that capital, to be expended either in agricultural or other industrial enterprizes, which has so greatly tended to the development of the resources of this country. I cannot help thinking that the very greatest evil that could be inflicted upon Ireland would be the adoption by the people of the advice to repudiate contracts which they have entered into. I will not refer to any of the subjects of legislation which have been mentioned in Her Majesty's Speech. But these are, no doubt, extremely important and practical, if not very exciting and inviting. This Parliament, however, whatever may be its merits, has never shown itself particularly anxious to engage with vigour in any work of legislation. In fact, in my opinion, this Parliament has been guided by two principles. It has given to Her Majesty's Government an unhesitating and undeviating support, and it has also shown a marked and steady aversion to work, and especially the work of legislation. No doubt, many measures which Her Majesty's Government have introduced have been met and opposed in a manner which has been most regrettable, and I think there has been during the present Parliament a great waste of time, and methods of opposition have been resorted to which are deeply to be deplored. I feel strongly that, unless some effort be made to restore the authority and the efficiency of Parliament, what has occurred during the existence of this Parliament may not only tend to its own discredit, but may exercise the most baneful influence on Parliaments yet to come. It is hardly, in my opinion, open to Her Majesty's Government to complain, as they have complained in the country, of the nature of the opposition which they have met. They have never made any determined attempt to repress that opposition. They never brought forward any measure, or suggested any action, for enabling the House to maintain and exercise its authority over a small minority. On the other hand, they have given the most convincing proof in their power that these shortcomings, if, indeed, they were in their opinion shortcomings at all, were shortcomings of a venial character, by announcing their determination to prolong to the very verge of its possible existence a Parliament which has been distinguished by a steady refusal to pass the measures which the Government have brought forward. The Government have proved that this shortcoming, whatever it may amount to on the part of this Parliament, may be compensated by the fidelity with which they have maintained an Administration and a Party in office and power.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, although the noble Lord opposite (the Marquess of Hartington) commenced his speech by mutilating the common form of expressions of congratulation to the Mover and Seconder of the Address, and confined his congratulations to my hon. and gallant Friend the Mover (Colonel Drummond-Moray), I must not follow the example which he has endeavoured to set. I cordially agree with the noble Lord in saying that we have never listened to a better and more promising speech than that in which the Address was moved; but I must take exception to the criticisms which the noble Lord passed upon the able and, as it seemed to me, very telling speech of the Seconder (Mr. J. P. Corry). I can quite understand that there may have been parts of that speech which were not altogether agreeable to the noble Lord, for, it seemed to me, my hon. Friend put one or two home questions which the noble Lord has very carefully abstained from noticing. I will not expose myself more than I can help to the reprimands of the noble Lord by introducing into the discussion of the Address more contentious matter than I can help; but the noble Lord himself has not altogether followed the precept he has endeavoured to impress upon us, for he has contrived to introduce a good deal of contentious matter into the observations to which we have listened, and I could have wished that he had been good enough to reply to the one particular question of my hon. Friend's, which is that we should like to know something about the attitude which he and the Liberal Party are taking towards the question which my hon. Friend called the Repeal of the Union. We should certainly like to know whether, for the future, it is to be an open question, like the Permissive Bill, the vaccination measure, or any other matter of that sort, or whether it is to be a question of cardinal and vital importance upon which there ought to be unanimity on the part of those who aspire to guide the country. But I do not desire to press this matter now. At the present moment it is my duty to offer, as far as I can, an answer to the observations which the noble Lord has made. Now, with regard to what was the beginning and the end of the noble Lord's speech, it seems to me that he is in a very unhappy state at having to meet the Friends whom he sees around him so often. He had hoped to get rid of us; he does not altogether like our company—but that, perhaps, is due to the point of view from which the noble Lord regards the House. But, certainly, he has made remarks upon the continuance of this Parliament which I think were altogether uncalled for, and, I would almost venture to say, somewhat unconstitutional. We know that by the law Parliaments may continue for seven years; and we know that by custom and Prerogative there is no privilege of a Minister which is more completely acknowledged than that of advising the Crown when and at what time to dissolve Parliament. That privilege has been exercised, and sometimes in a rather strange and unexpected manner, by Ministers of whom the noble Lord has a better opinion than he has of the present Prime Minister; but we claim for ourselves the same liberty which has been accorded to all our Predecessors; and I venture to think there is nothing in the history of this Parliament, in the condition of the country, or the state of the world at large, that can throw any doubt upon the wisdom and propriety of the course which the Prime Minister has pursued in abstaining from offering any advice to Her Majesty which would have dissolved Parliament before its full time had run. Why, with regard to the great bulk of the questions affecting our foreign policy generally, what has the noble Lord told us? He said that with many of these matters he did not intend to trouble the House, because they were, in fact, closed transactions. Well, they are closed transactions; and it is happy they are so. But would they have been closed transactions if, in the middle of the settlement of the most delicate and important questions affecting and exciting populations far removed from our own country, we had been thrown into all the turmoil of a General Election? The result would have been that all those matters which were gradually settling down in Europe would have been disturbed by the agitation which would have been caused at home. I think that is a point which must have escaped the notice of some of those who criticize the conduct of the Government in not hastening forward the dissolution of the British Parliament. We know that that is always a time of great excitement, and that at a moment when foreign affairs were settling down it was exactly the time when it was not desirable that that excitement should be produced. But the noble Lord tells us that this is a very bad House, that it is a House which has got into a way of obstructing Public Business, and he marvels, considering the character we have established for it, that we keep it in existence, and then he is good enough to say that he lays all the blame of this obstruction not so much upon those who obstruct as upon the Members of Her Majesty's Government. Well, we are accustomed now to hear everything that goes wrong laid to the charge of the Government. I, however, hardly expected to hear this particular charge brought against us; but I am quite prepared to expect that, amongst the number of sins which are brought against us, this should be included. But I must be allowed to say that if the noble Lord means to say that the proceedings which have caused so many remarks, and which he very justly says have somewhat detracted from the character of this House, are to be charged upon those who have failed to take adequate means of repressing them, he and his Friends must bear their full share of the responsibility. I altogether repudiate his statement that no proposals have been made with the view of preventing the difficulties which have arisen, and I say that when we have made proposals we have not been met by the noble Lord, and still less by those who sit about him and enjoy his confidence, with that support and that cordiality which we had a right to expect; and, further, I will say that if in this Session we are to conduct our business, as I trust it will be conducted, in a manner in accordance with the high character of the House of Commons, it can only be on the condition that those who sit on this side of the House shall receive the entire and honest support of those who, sitting on the other side, take a leading part in our discussions. I am sorry to have been led into these controversial remarks, which the noble Lord so justly deprecates; but I was placed in a position in which I really could not help myself. I shall now endeavour to say as briefly as I can a few words on some of the points to which the noble Lord has referred in his commentary upon the Speech. The noble Lord asks us what is the present position of the negotiations with regard to the Turko-Greek Frontier. Well, that is, undoubtedly, a question of very considerable delicacy. Her Majesty's Government feel entirely with the noble Lord that it is a question which affects the interests of Turkey herself quite as much as it affects the interests of Greece. Her Majesty's Government have more than once impressed upon the Turkish Government and people that the interests of Turkey are largely involved in the settlement of the question as regards defining her Frontier on that side, and as far as it has been in our power we have impressed upon both parties the importance of being reasonable, and endeavouring to bring those negotiations to a satisfactory settlement. But there have been difficulties in the way—there have been, I think, great mistakes made on both sides. There have been unreasonable propositions on the one side, met by unreasonable counter-propositions on the other side; and it has been exceedingly difficult to bring the two parties to anything which offered the prospect of a settlement. I believe there has been some doubt as to the time when certain proposals were made; and, therefore, I will trouble the House with a few dates. The matter has been lately under the discussion of the Greek and Turkish Commissioners at Constantinople, and the details will be contained in the Papers which will very soon be presented to the House. But, to put the case shortly, the first meeting was held on the 17th of November. Other meetings were from time to time suggested, but were put off until the 29th of December, at which time the Conference seemed to have come to an end; but in the meanwhile, on the 19th of December, M. Waddington communicated to Her Majesty's Government the proposal of a line of Frontier which he recommended, and the proposal was submitted also to the other Great Powers. On the 21st of December, however, the French Ministry resigned, and it was not until the 7th of January that M. de Freycinet, the new French Minister of Foreign Affairs, informed Lord Lyons that he adhered to M. Waddington's proposal, and was anxious to have the opinion of Her Majesty's Government upon it. My noble Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (the Marquess of Salisbury) has since discussed the matter with the French Ambassador, and the result will be found in one of the Papers which will be communicated to the House, in which Lord Salisbury expressed himself in favour of proceeding by an International European Commission. The matter will be more clearly shown by the Papers which will be laid upon the Table, and I will only say again that it is a matter to which we attach great importance in the interests of both parties and in the interests of European peace. Well, Sir, I hope I need not go into all the details of all the questions to which the noble Lord has referred. There is no doubt that the state of Turkey is one which causes the greatest difficulty, and I am glad to see that the noble Lord perceives that there is a difficulty in this matter. The country has been instructed, and I believe a large number of people are under the impression that if it had not been for some extraordinary and entirely gratuitous action on the part of Her Majesty's Government everything would have been perfectly comfortable in the Turkish Empire, and that the state of affairs would have been such as to cause no anxiety; that, at all events, if there were difficulties, they could very easily have been removed. We have never taken that view; we have always known that the position was one of the greatest possible difficulty. We have known that the reform of the Turkish Empire was not a matter which could be accomplished by a despatch written from our Foreign Office, even if it were written by a Liberal Foreign Secretary—for they are very good at writing despatches and giving good advice which never seems to come to anything. We have always felt that if anything was to be done it could not be done by a few despatches, but that it must be done by patience and perseverence, by representations continually renewed; by the taking of every opportunity, good, bad, or indifferent, which might present itself of impressing not only on the Government, but on the populations of the Turkish Empire, how needful and desirable those reforms were. And that, I venture to say, has been the course taken by our distinguished Representative, Sir Henry Layard. He has been constant, in season and out of season, in endeavouring to give effect to those remedial measures; and it is a little mortifying to him, whether he speaks or whether he does not speak, to find that he is equally the subject of abuse and found fault with for meddling in those matters. These difficulties are of the greatest possible magnitude, and that subject to which the noble Lord referred, rather, I think, in a contemptuous tone—namely, that arising from the financial embarrassments of the Porte—adds enormously to the task. In this case, Turkey is in a condition which is very unsatisfactory — embarrassed by the consequences of a very great war and by enormous financial losses, yet in that position she is called upon at once to make reforms such as might well be the work of many years. All I can say is, that the Government do not shrink from the task they have undertaken—that they will not shrink from it; but are doing, and will continue to do, the best they can to bring about a better state of things in Turkey. As I have said, Papers on the subject will be presented, and I think I must prepare the House to see in those Papers very strong fresh evidence of the unfortunate condition of parts of Asiatic Turkey; but that is not a lesser, it is a greater, and the more reason why we should not shrink from the task we have undertaken. The noble Lord has referred to other European questions—the question of the relations between Germany and Austria, the increase of the German Army, and the general condition of Europe, and he tells us that he never knew a time more alarming than the present—alarming, on account of the attitude which different nations are taking up with respect to each other, alarming on account of the political and social condition of those nations. And what is the inference which the noble Lord draws from this? It is that England ought to limit her responsibilities, for that then she could look on all those things with an eye of calmness. Sir, there is the difference between us. I come to an exactly opposite conclusion. I say that if Europe is in this condition, if there are those dangers to be apprehended, we cannot afford to abrogate our position in the Councils of Europe, and that it would be ill for the peace and prosperity of Europe that we should do so. I do not know that it would be altogether in accordance with the practice of Parliament if I were to discuss the relations between Germany and Austria. I can only say that there is no matter which gives us greater pleasure than to see cordial relations existing between those two Empires, such as I believe do exist. I believe they are relations which are acceptable to the peoples of those two great Empires, and such as must tend to their advantage, and to the preservation of the peace of Europe. Then the noble Lord speaks of an alliance for the purpose of repressing the Danubian Principalities. Well, that is only another of those mares' nests which the Liberal Party are always finding for us. East Roumelia and Bulgaria and the other Principalities are making fair progress; they are working out problems which I hope will be satisfactorily solved, and they are making great advances in constitutional government and in the development of their own States. What they chiefly require is to be let alone, and not to be too much patronized and hampered by meddlesome assistance from without from other Powers. Well, Sir, I will say nothing more at present as to those foreign questions. I think the terms in which Her Majesty has been pleased to address us represents correctly the present state of affairs. The general course of events has been such as to give additional security for the maintenance of European peace, and that has been the leading principle of the Treaty of Berlin. The noble Lord has spoken upon other questions, and has touched one which, of course, is of the highest interest and importance. He has referred to our relations with Afghanistan, and laments that there is no declaration in Her Majesty's gracious Speech of our policy. The noble Lord has given us his own version of what that policy is, and, at the same time, has made some remarks upon questions which undoubtedly excite the interest of the House and of the country. We have already presented a Blue Book on the subject, and further information down to the latest period will be in the hands of hon. Members to-morrow morning. I think I heard a Notice given this evening, by an hon. Member who takes a great interest in Indian affairs, of a Motion of his own which will give an opportunity for a full discussion of the question; and therefore it may not be necessary for me to detain the House at any length with reference to it. At the same time it is right for me, in answer to the observation of the noble Lord with respect to Sir Frederick Roberts, to say one or two words, because we cannot too soon vindicate, as far as the information in our possession at present enables us to vindicate, the character of that distinguished officer, who, I am sure, deserves the highest admiration. All through the transactions in which we have been engaged he has played a leading part, and has distinguished himself by his conduct as a military commander, in which capacity he has shown characteristics which have called forth the warmest commendation; and he is certainly a man to whom, in the difficult position in which he has been placed, we ought to be very chary of imputing motives which can derogate from the character of a British officer. The noble Lord attempted to throw blame upon Sir Frederick Roberts, and he asked what were the instructions given to him by the Indian Government, remarking with great truth that, as to responsibility, very much depended upon the nature of those instructions. The Papers will be in the hands of hon. Members in a very few days, and I will quote a very short paragraph from the Instructions which were sent to Sir Frederick Roberts on the 29th of September, 1879. He was told, among other things, that—

> "In regard to the punishment of individuals it should be swift, stern, and impressive, without being indiscriminate or immoderate. Its infliction must not be delegated to subordinate officers of minor responsibility, acting independently of your instructions or supervision, and you cannot too vigilantly maintain the discipline of the troops under your orders, or superintend their treatment of the unarmed population so long as your orders are obeyed and your authority is unresisted. You will deal summarily in the majority of cases with persons whose share in the murder of anyone belonging to the British Embassy shall have been proved by your investigations; but while the execution of justice should be as public and striking as possible, it should be completed with all practicable expedition, since the indefinite prolongation of your proceedings might spread abroad unfounded alarm."—[*Afghanistan* (1880), No. 1, p. 98.]

Sir Frederick Roberts, in acknowledging and replying to these Instructions, which he did on the 16th of October, said—

> "For the thorough investigation of the causes and circumstances of the late outbreak, and the collection of all possible evidence regarding the conduct of individuals since the arrival of the British Embassy in Cabul, I have nominated a commission, consisting of the members marginally named — President, Colonel C. M. Macgregor, C.B., C.S.I., C.I.E.; members, Surgeon-Major Bellew, C.S.I., and Mahomed Hyat Khan, C.S.I. Their duties will be comprehensive, and will include the submission of representations regarding the punishment to be inflicted on all persons whom they may find guilty of participation, direct or indirect, active or passive, in the attack on the Residency, or of other connected offences calling for notice. Every such recommendation will be carefully considered by me, and his Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General in Council may rely upon my carrying out most strictly the instructions conveyed in Paragraph 8 of your letter under reply."

Since that Correspondence has passed, statements have been made in reference to the course taken by Sir Frederick Roberts which have caused Her Majesty's Government to call upon Sir Frederick for a complete account of the number of persons executed; and we have been informed by telegraph that a full account is on the way. Such full account is on the way, and will be laid before Parliament when received. I hope, therefore, the House will perceive that we have not neglected or delayed inquiry into these matters, and shall not say more now than to ask the House to do Sir Frederick Roberts the common justice of waiting for his reply before condemning the action he has taken. It is impossible to pass from this question without the House knowing that it is since August last the terrible catastrophe occurred in Cabul, and saying that at the time the last Session closed Her Majesty's Government had no reason to believe that the position of our gallant Envoy Sir Louis Cavagnari and his colleagues was one of anxiety or danger. He had been specially invited to Cabul by the Ameer, on the ground that it was in the capital the most secure protection could be afforded him, and he had proceeded to the city with a small escort purposely to show that his visit was of a friendly character, and that it had no concealed design of violence or force behind it. The suddenness of and the circumstances of the attack which was subsequently made upon the Embassy, and the gallant way in which Sir Louis Cavagnari and his comrades defended it against overwhelming numbers, are all well known, and I would venture to say that no day in the history of the Indian Empire of the Queen will shine more brightly, as far as the gallantry of her servants is concerned, than that on which her Envoy at Cabul and his fellows fell fighting in defence of the Embassy. The noble Lord has asked us to pronounce a policy in regard to foreign and colonial matters, and in answer to him I can only repeat that our policy is in those respects unchanged. The principle of our policy with regard to Afghanistan and our North-Western Frontier has always been this—that we have not desired to annex territory or to extend our Empire, but simply to secure a sufficiently strong Frontier to our Indian Empire to inspire our subjects within it with confidence, and to put an end to all anxieties and suspicions which may have existed in their minds from fear of possible invasion in consequence of a weak Frontier. In carrying out this plan, the other policy which we have always had in view was that beyond that Frontier, so made strong, we should have a State, or, if you please, a number of States, in such relations with us that they could not be made the base of hostile operations against us. For that purpose it has always been the policy of former Governments, as well as of ours, to maintain friendly relations with the Ameer and the people of Afghanistan, so as to keep them out of the influence of foreign Powers; but the result has been that which the House so well and so sorrowfully knows. That has been our policy, and it was only when we found ourselves unable to trust to the fidelity of Shere Ali to the engagements he had entered into, when we found it impossible to view with indifference his reception of a Russian Mission, while he refused a Mission from us, that we felt ourselves obliged to take other steps which have led to the present position. But our policy and our views are the same as they have ever been. We still desire to maintain and strengthen our Frontier. We still desire to maintain an independent State or an independent cluster of States outside or around us. It is a matter of comparative indifference to us whether we have to deal with one or several States; but it is impossible for me to enter into a consideration of these questions at the present moment. The organization that Afghanistan may hereafter assume must be treated as a whole, and we are unable to give explanations now because events have not yet developed themselves, and we have not yet obtained that position that would enable us to withdraw from the positions we occupy. As at present advised, our position is the one which we have always held in regard to this question. As for the other questions to which the noble Lord referred, I can simply say that it is at this moment out of my power to give him information concerning the Budget, and that on the subject of the Boers and the annexation of the Transvaal, as to which the noble Lord commented on the omission from Her Majesty's Speech of any reference to those subjects, Papers will speedily be laid before the House which will include some relating to the condition of the Transvaal, and will also show what the view of Her Majesty's Government is with reference to its future government. When the noble Lord says we were led to annex the Transvaal under a false representation, and that it was not true that a majority of the people assented to that annexation, I would remind him that the annexation was effected by a single British officer, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, with a handful of policemen, and that no opposition was then offered to his proceedings. It is a most important matter that will require full consideration; and it is a matter of great congratulation to us that Her Majesty is able to declare that we have now better hopes than we ever had before of bringing about that great scheme of the Confederation of our South African possessions which has been so long an object of desire. The noble Lord made some observations on the unfortunate condition of the country, and on the unfortunate condition of agriculture, which all must admit for the moment is greatly depressed. At the same time, it is a matter for congratulation that there appears to be a real and substantial revival in many branches of industry and trade in this country, and it cannot but be that the revival must benefit the great interests of agriculture. Undoubtedly, however, we are very far as yet from being in a condition to congratulate ourselves. The noble Lord concluded with some remarks on the condition of Ireland. As far as that subject is concerned, the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) has given Notice of an Amendment to the Address, which will raise a discussion with regard to Irish distress, and upon that I shall have something to say; but I may now observe that I shall to-morrow, in asking leave to introduce a Bill to indemnify Her Majesty's Government for what they have already done, and to make some further provision, say something at length on the subject. Therefore, I hope my hon. Friends will not think me at all treating Ireland with indifference if I say less now than I should otherwise have been disposed to do. But I do say that we have from the beginning of the autumn watched with the greatest interest and with warm sympathy the condition and suffering of certain parts of Ireland. The noble Lord has said that Her Majesty's Government has at hand sufficient machinery to enable it to get every kind and amount of information concerning the condition of Ireland to enable it to deal with the distressed condition of the country which we all deplore. That is perfectly true, and when the hon. Members see the Papers which have been presented to-day, and which will be in their hands to-morrow, they will find that the Irish and the English Governments have not been remiss in making use of that machinery. They will find that from September—for the first document among the Papers in question is a Circular issued by the Local Government Board on the 5th of September—down to the present day, the Irish Local Government Board have been engaged in collecting the fullest and most reliable information with regard to the condition of every part of Ireland, and making recommendations with regard to such parts as seem to call for special aid. I think that is a matter of great importance, because I need not remind the noble Lord, with his experience of Irish affairs, nor those who can remember the circumstances of the great Famine of 1846, 1847, and 1848, of this—that if we are to make provision against a great calamity of that kind, for the relief of existing distress, and for the prevention of future suffering, we must exercise the greatest care in what we do. It does not do merely to put our hands into our pockets and to throw about as much money as we can indiscriminately; but we have to look not only to the immediate but to the future results of what we are doing. When we are told that we ought to have spent money upon this or that particular class of works, one must not forget the experience which we had, and which forms part of the history of the Famine of 1846—namely, that men preferred to work upon the public works rather than to pursue their ordinary work of tilling the land. We have to beware lest, by taking too much upon ourselves, the idea that the Government should provide work might make the people or the local authorities careless of making proper exertions for themselves. It should be clearly kept in view that what the Government can do must merely be supplemental to local exertion, and in order to make their aid supplemental, they must take care that the aid they offer does not become the principal source to which the people look for relief. When I introduce to-morrow the Bill to which I have referred, I shall think it right to make some further observations on this subject, and to go more into detail. With regard to the particular questions which the noble Lord has raised, I think that he will find, on referring to the Papers I have mentioned, that we have not confined ourselves to offering loans to landlords. We have offered them, on favourable terms, to the sanitary authorities, and we have done more—we have made provision for calling together, in case of necessity, the baronial sessions, and for inviting them to make presentments, and have made the terms very easy upon which loans can be obtained on such presentments being made. We have also directed our attention to another matter of great importance—that of out-door relief. The very first thing, indeed, that we thought of was to tell the Boards of Guardians to take care, whatever happened, to prevent anybody dying from starvation. At a very early stage we warned those bodies to provide stores of food and fuel, and to take care that they should be distributed in case of necessity, encouraging them to understand that there would be some latitude given in the distribution. In the

Bill which I shall have the honour to present to the House to-morrow, we propose to give greater powers, subject to the supervision of the Local Government Board, to the Boards of Guardians, and to enable them to afford such relief to the holders of land, suspending that provision which limits the power of receiving it to persons who have not any land at all. I mention this fact to show that we have gone into the details of this subject, and that we have not overlooked the points to which the noble Lord referred. Without doubt, however, we shall be criticized both for what we have done and for what we have not done. That is always the fate of those who stand in the position of the Government, and who are obliged to enforce prudence, although doing the best and wisest thing for the interests of their patients, if I may call them so. When we do so enforce prudence, we must expect to be very much abused and to be called hard-hearted. I trust, however, that what we have shown has not been hard-heartedness, but hard-headedness. I cannot sit down without acknowledging the charitable spirit that has manifested itself on this occasion in both countries. We know perfectly well that there are various committees and agencies formed for the relief of the distress in Ireland, and that persons are ready to devote not only their money, but their work and their time to the assistance of these poor people, and I am satisfied that the stream of charity which has so freely flowed on other occasions will not fail us in the present case. I hope I may be excused for speaking personally of the efforts of one noble Lady who has taken a part in this good work. I know she does not require any words of mine, and does not desire any praise for what she is doing. She is acting on the impulse of her own heart, and is doing all in her power to fulfil the high duty which she believes is cast upon her by her position in Ireland. She and all others are working with the sincere desire of doing good; and if we, the Government, are bound to show a little more prudence and apparent hard-heartedness, it is not because our sympathies are less, but because we feel that our responsibilities are greater. I will not enter now into the other topics that have been raised, and I hope that on this subject I have said sufficient to induce the noble Lord to think better of what we have done. I even hope that the hon. Member for the County of Cork will be reasonable and fair enough not to carry out his proposal to move an Amendment to the Address, but that he will wait to hear what the Government have really done, and are doing, towards the relief of the distress in his country before proceeding to condemn us. Perhaps, however, he will think that it will be easier to condemn us before than after he hears us, and that he will be more unfettered in making his attack if he does so in comparative ignorance of what we have done than he will be if he waits until he has received full information on the subject, and finds that we are blameless in the matter.

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE said, that he had to refer to certain questions of home affairs which were mentioned in the Address, but were not referred to either by the noble Lord (the Marquess of Hartington) or the Leader of the House, and other matters of domestic legislation, the omission of which was still more remarkable. For instance, at the end of last Session a promise was renewed, which had frequently before been made, that the Corrupt Practices Bill should be in the first rank of the Government measures of the present Session. He was sorry not to see it mentioned in the Speech. As dissolution was certain within a year, the importance which it undoubtedly demanded ought to be given to the Corrupt Practices Bill, and they ought this Session thoroughly to consider the law of corrupt practices. It was admitted that the law on the subject needed reform. Then there was the subject of the Ballot Act. That Act, as they knew, would shortly expire, and would require to be renewed in a way that would enable the House to discuss questions of scrutiny and other matters. Of course, it could be renewed by a Continuance Bill in the last week of the Session; but he ventured to say that would be a most unsatisfactory mode of dealing with a matter of that kind. There was a Select Committee in 1876, which thoroughly considered the working of the Ballot Act, and which made many recommendations as to its amendment. There were questions which were not dealt with by that Committee, but which were discussed the year before when the Ballot Bill became law, such as the terrorism exercised on many tenants by their landlords. Again, he wished to know whether the Government had abandoned the Employers and Workmen Bill or not? He trusted they had not. Their County Government Bill and their Valuation Bill had now, it seemed, finally disappeared. For all practical purposes they might be looked upon as dead. No subject was more worthy the attention of the House than that of county government; but it was evidently one with which a Conservative Ministry was unable to deal. He did not know whether the Copyright Bill of last year would be re-introduced; but, if it were brought in again, he hoped it would assume an amended form, for artists of all kinds were much opposed to the measure as it stood last year. Then the Home Secretary had promised last Session to deal completely with the Metropolitan Water Supply. He had seen Notices which led him to suppose that the Government were going on with a scheme; but the question was so important that he thought it should have now been mentioned by the Government. Turning to the Irish paragraphs of the Queen's Speech, he remarked that they contained no reference to any amendment of the Irish Land Laws. There were many not connected with Ireland who believed most firmly that giving money would not remedy the evils without going to the root of the matter by dealing with the Irish Land Laws; and they ought to be told whether the Government intended to bring in any measure relating to them this year. He had heard with great satisfaction what had fallen that night from the Leader of the House with regard to the claims of Greece; and it would be the determination of hon. Gentlemen on his side of the House to keep the Government up to what the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, and to see that the arrangements which his language suggested were carried out. There was no allusion in the Speech to the affairs of Egypt. Never had this country been committed to so large a scheme fraught with dangerous complications for the future without the knowledge of Parliament as was now the case with respect to Egypt. The Papers on the subject were last year kept back till they were too late to be of use; and the documents issued showed that the European controllers were really to exercise almost the whole powers of government. With regard to the Treaty of Gandamak, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that there was no reason to suppose that the position of our Envoy at Cabul was one of peculiar danger. What had occurred within the walls of that House sufficed to refute that statement. The hon. Members for Elgin (Mr. Grant Duff) and Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell), and other hon. Members of the House, had over and over again pointed out that that would happen which actually had happened. As to the retribution for the massacre, the right hon. Gentleman had read the instructions given on the 29th of September by the Government to Sir Frederick Roberts; but he had not mentioned the Proclamation issued by Sir Frederick Roberts upon which the noble Lord (the Marquess of Hartington) had based his animadversions. It was clear to anyone who read that Proclamation that General Roberts went far beyond his instructions; and the Indian Government, who were in daily communication with him by telegraph, must have been perfectly cognizant of what he did. General Roberts was instructed to punish for acts connected with the attack on the Residency; but in his Proclamation he expressed his intention to punish persons who had not been concerned in that attack, but were Afghan soldiers who had fought against us while we had Yakoob Khan in our camp. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had quoted the words "direct or indirect assistance," and "active or passive assistance in the attack on the Residency." Perhaps they might hereafter be told that the words were so wide that they would cover the execution of men who belonged to regiments members of which were also concerned in the attack on the Residency. They might have subtle casuistical arguments raised about the matter. With regard to the number of men we hanged and otherwise executed, he thought that as the Government had sent over for the information it would not be well to press them. He desired further to ask the attention of the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Colonies to a statement in the paragraph of the Speech referring to South Africa. The capture and deposition of the Zulu King were referred to with approval; but no reason had ever been given for his capture and deposition. Although they could not debate the subject, he thought it might be advantageous to the defence of the Government themselves that they should continue the story of the Zulu War by indicating their general opinion upon it. They had previously obtained a very clear statement from the Colonial Secretary as to the reason why Sir Garnet Wolseley was sent out. They had no reason to suppose that the instructions to Sir Garnet had been changed, although he had been told to accept any reasonable terms of peace. He did not do so; and the House should take notice of the fact that the Opposition altogether denied the necessity for avoiding making that peace which was promised it in May. With regard to the Transvaal, they had certainly expected to find in the paragraph of the Speech relating to it some expression of sorrow as to what had happened there. Arrests were being made there for high treason, and the bitter feeling against us was beginning to spread. They were told that matters were progressing towards Confederation. But, so far as they knew at the present moment, affairs were progressing backwards towards Federation, for there was less prospect of such a thing than ever. They had been informed that there was no objection made at the time of the annexation; but although only one officer made the declaration, it was to be remembered that the 24th Regiment was stationed on the Frontier. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not go so far as to say that our rule was popular among the Boers; and although matters in South Africa were progressing but little, he thought it would be hardly possible to reach a good settlement with them without a Federation of some sort. The paragraph in the Speech gave a far too optimist view of the situation. Confederation was impossible as long as we continued to govern the Transvaal against its will, and the Government had only succeeded in making the South African paragraph satisfactory by omitting all reference to these facts.

MR. E. JENKINS desired to offer a few observations on one subject only referred to in Her Majesty's most gracious Speech, and, before doing so, because he happened to differ from the line taken by the noble Lord (the Marquess of Hartington) and by the hon. Baronet who had just spoken (Sir Charles W. Dilke) in regard to the position of affairs in the Transvaal, he wished simply to say that the references made to that subject were rather unfortunate, and with regard to the Transvaal he could not but think that the Opposition had so far committed themselves that it was hardly fair to treat it now as an open question. If the maxim of Talleyrand was to be accepted, that speech was given us to conceal thought, a happier exposition of it could not be found than in Her Majesty's Speech. One looked at these paragraphs with wonder, for there were clever men in the Ministry, men of literary ability and an appreciation of the value of words; but, looking at these paragraphs, which were gravely presented to the Houses of Parliament, and regarded by the country as the result of the advice given by the Cabinet to the Sovereign, one must feel they had reached a very low standard indeed in politics and literature if that was the best that could be produced by such a Cabinet. For a moment he asked the House to look at the Afghanistan paragraph of the Speech. In an endeavour to interpret that passage one met with considerable difficulty. What was the principle that remained unchanged? So far as he knew the history of our operations in Afghanistan it was a history of a change of principles from day to day—a change of policy and of operations brought about by changes in conditions and circumstances. There was an assurance from the Ministry that their principle was unchanged; but he would defy anyone to say on what principle the Government had acted in Afghanistan. The truth was, it was a "happy-go-lucky" policy throughout—an awaiting for events or a drifting along that had drifted the country into new perils and complications. But there was a sort of admonition in the other portion of the paragraph, which read—

> "While determined to make the frontiers of My Indian Empire strong, I desire to be on friendly relations alike with those who may rule in Afghanistan and with the people of that Country."

The methods by which we endeavoured to establish friendly relations there were only too conspicuously before the world, and our extreme friendship might be judged by the number of executions which our General now in hostile possession of the country found it necessary to make. Never was paragraph more ridiculous presented to men of sense to interpret, and it was the best comment upon the Government's Afghan policy that they were unable to produce anything better than this memorable paragraph. But a question had been raised on which he had from time to time endeavoured to obtain information from Her Majesty's Government, so far as he could keep the Government up to the professions made in the House. He alluded to the Turkish Convention, and he was induced to ask the attention of the House to that, because last night the noble Lord, who was stumping Liverpool as an electioneering agent in the interest of the Government (Viscount Sandon), made it a subject of a part of a speech. It would be observed that the Convention was only feebly, distantly alluded to in the Speech from the Throne. After the reference to the friendly relations with foreign Powers, the Speech continued—

> "The course of events since the prorogation of Parliament has tended to furnish additional security to the maintenance of European peace on the principles laid down by the Treaty of Berlin."

But the principles of the Treaty of Berlin were not general principles. They were simply propositions in reference to the relations between Turkey and the Powers, and here were Her Majesty's Ministers endeavouring to induce the House to believe there were great principles laid down in the Berlin Treaty, which, in fact, did not exist therein. Then Her Majesty's Ministers ventured to refer to the condition of affairs in Turkey in these terms—

> "Much, however, still remains to be done to repair the disorder with which the late War has affected many parts of the Turkish Empire."

He wished to call the attention of the House to the fact that in this way the Government were utterly ignoring the enormous responsibility they had incurred in Asiatic Turkey. The noble Lord (the Marquess of Hartington) in a few chosen sentences had already criticized that portion of the Government's action; but when he (Mr. Jenkins) looked at Her Majesty's Speech he was rather startled to find that all we had at the end of two years for the responsibility we had incurred in Asia Minor —after all the promises repeatedly made in both Houses of Parliament, and to the country outside the House, with regard to what the Government were going to do—all he could find in 1880 was that the Government were able to say "much remains to be done." The truth of the case was, everything remained to be done. It would have been more correct to say nothing had been done—nothing at all—after obtaining the Turkish Convention, occupying Cyprus, and promising to defend Turkey against attack from Russia. Not long ago—at the end of last Session—Her Majesty's Speech alluded to the reforms promised by the Ottoman Government and the manner in which Her Majesty's Government would urge their adoption. Her Majesty's Government had continued to urge, but in vain; and he ventured to say if the present Government were in power for another seven years their representations would be equally in vain. It was right to hold Ministers who called for the confidence of the country on the grounds of certain things they had done to the words they had used, and he reminded the House of his repeated challenges to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to show the *bona fides* of their promises to enforce reforms under the Convention; and now he hoped it was not saying an improper thing when he said he believed it was a mere sham devised for election and Party purposes. In August, 1878, he had called the attention of the House to the position of the Turkish Convention and the pledges we had given, and at that time the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, "Wait and see how results will expose the fallacy of the anticipations." But for nearly two years he had waited, and still not a glimmer or sign of these Turkish reforms. Of course, the Government had had difficulties, and had to deal with a Government slippery as an eel and as difficult to skin; but were the Government ever really in earnest in their programme of reform? Did they ever prepare a programme of reform which they were willing to accept? It was humiliating to consider how we had been overreached by this weak Power, on whose behalf our Fleet had assumed such a migratory character. The noble Lord the Leader of the Government in "another place" on the 13th February, 1879, had complained of the harsh measures dealt out to the Sultan. His sincerity and ability to carry out reforms in Asia Minor having been questioned, the noble Lord stated, at that time, that communications between Her Majesty's Government and that of the Sublime Porte had been of a satisfactory character. Subsequently the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made similar statements and gave similar assurances. Lord Beaconsfield stated that he had heard what he stated by telegraph; but it turned out that his information was absolutely incorrect. There never was a symptom of anything like even a just acknowledgment of the responsibility incurred by the Sultan. If this was not an important matter for the consideration of Parliament he did not know what was. How was it that instead of being in a position to dictate as to reforms to the Government at Constantinople, Her Majesty's Government had the least influence, and England was the weakest Power in Europe in controlling the action of the Sublime Porte? This he could prove if he cared now to detain the House; but he wished to take notice of a speech made last night at Liverpool by a noble Lord, who was certainly not one of the most influential Members of Her Majesty's Government. He (Mr. Jenkins) could not help saying that Viscount Sandon had been sent down to Liverpool to deceive by his statements the people of England. He stated that in the affairs of Turkey the Government had achieved a magnificent triumph, and found fault with the hon. and learned Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt) for having entered into a criticism of the Turkish Convention. The noble Lord said that the Government were not going to bolster up the bad Government of the Porte, but that they should try and reform it, and then he complained of people like the hon. and learned Member for Oxford, who had criticized the action of the Government in the affairs of Turkey. Then the noble Lord said that Her Majesty's Government would bring back prosperity to Syria. He (Mr. Jenkins) thought the noble Lord could only carry back prosperity to Syria in a hand-cart, and the picture of the noble Lord doing so would be very effective. Although the Russian troops had left Turkish soil for two years they were now told that the English Consuls and Vice Consuls were taking note of everything that the Turkish officers were doing, the consequence being that the latter were trembling. Now, that was the result of our action two years after the Russians had evacuated Turkish territory. He had there a letter written by a gentleman well known to, and respected by, hon. Members of that House on both sides, and what he stated might be absolutely relied upon. He wrote that the English interest in Turkey was at the lowest ebb. Every suggestion made by Englishmen was resisted, because it came from an English source. Before the Turkish resistance to anything English was passive; but now the Turks were determined to show by their acts that they were not disposed to be dictated to by us. The promised reforms of Lord Beaconsfield had never been carried out, and the large schemes of reforms to which he referred never had a chance of success. Not even the shreds and fragments of the reforms suggested by us were carried out, and no proof was forthcoming that England's influence had been successful in bringing any reform to the front. The writer concluded by saying that the great mistake made from the first was in supposing that the Turkish Government was capable of any reform. Therefore, he (Mr. Jenkins) contended that what our Government proposed to do in the way of forcing reforms upon Turkey turned out to be sham, and had had no practical result. Hon. Members opposite were in the habit of saying that those hon. Members who sat below the Gangway were craven at heart, and not public-spirited enough in support of English interests. Well, as one of that body, he wished to say that he was always opposed to Russian aggression against the interests of this country, and he and they regretted to see English influence thrown over in Turkey. He contended now, as he had often contended before, that Her Majesty's Government had by their policy played into the hands of Russia, after engaging in the solemn undertaking of a Convention with Turkey. The effect of that Convention had been absolutely valueless. It had not been productive of a shadow of a reform, and, that being so, he thought he was justified in calling upon Her Majesty's Government to explain to the House why it was that at this moment England was the weakest Power as regarded her influence with Turkey.

Mr. FAWCETT said, he did not rise with any intention of continuing the debate upon the general issues which had been raised; but he would desire to refer to an extraordinary omission which was observable throughout the debate. They had been told that they had entered upon a great Imperial policy. He did not wish to enter upon any controversial topic; but the question he desired to ask was with respect to the cost of the war which had been undertaken. Was the cost to be borne by India or by England, or was it to be borne by both; and, if the latter, what were to be the proportions? India had contributed £2,600,000, and, so far, £320,000, or one-seventh of that sum, was all that England had been called upon and asked to contribute. Now that hostilities had re-commenced, he trusted the Government would not propose to apportion the additional expenditure between England and India on the same unjust principle. If they did so, it was a course, he believed, which would meet with the greatest disapprobation on the part of the English people. The question had not been referred to either by the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition or the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he hoped the Government would give them some distinct assurance on the subject; but he had carefully abstained from giving Notice of any Motion, in order not to embarrass the Government. Another omission from Her Majesty's most gracious Speech was the matter of the water supply of London; and he wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intended to redeem the promise he had made last Session?

Mr. ASSHETON CROSS said, his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer was quite prepared to state the views of the Government upon the question of the Afghan expenditure. The present occasion, however, was scarcely a favourable one; it would be better to wait until the Papers which had been promised were before the House. With regard to the water supply of London, he (Mr. Cross) had no doubt a great improvement would be effected by placing the works of the eight existing Companies under one management; and he might say that, following up the promise he gave last Session, he had been in communication with the various Water Companies on the subject. He was not at present prepared to state the result of his negotiations with them; but he hoped to do so in the course of a week or ten days at the outside, and to bring forward certain proposals in the form of a Bill. It would be a Public Bill, and, considering the difficulty of making a bargain as between the consumers of water and the ratepayers on the one hand, and the several Water Companies on the other, the course pursued would be this—the Government would lay before Parliament such terms as they had been able to induce the Companies to assent to, and which they thought advantageous for the public to accept, and submit them to Parliament in the form of a Bill; and that Bill on its second reading would be sent to a Hybrid Committee, in order that all parties interested in it might have a fair opportunity of considering whether the bargain so proposed was one which would be advantageous, on the whole, to the Metropolis. Of course, all the Committee would have to decide would be whether it was a bargain which ought to be carried into effect or not. It would certainly not be competent for them to alter the terms of the bargain.

Mr. DILLWYN hoped the Government would fulfil their oft-repeated promise of passing a Bill for the amendment of the Lunacy Laws. He himself would bring forward a Bill on the subject this Session in the hope that the Government would aid him in carrying it through. As, however, the views of the Government on the subject seemed to be very much in accord with his own, he would not press it for the present. With regard to the obstruction of Business, he thought the Government themselves were the chief culprits. They did not seem to be aware that in carrying Bills forward a stage or two, and then dropping them every Session, they wasted much valuable time, and were, in fact, the greatest obstructives in the House. With regard to the debate of that evening, he did not hold with the doctrine that it was inexpedient to move Amendments on the Address. When statements were made in Her Majesty's Speech with which any section of hon. Members did not agree, he held that it was the duty of those hon. Members to express their views in an Amendment, otherwise the proceedings of that House in relation to the Address would partake of the nature of a sham. It was, moreover, in accordance with ancient custom that Amendments on the Address should be moved. Bearing in mind the criticisms expressed on the Government during the Recess by many Members of the Opposition, he did not think the debate of that evening would be a reality if they agreed to the Motion unanimously. He regretted that an Amendment was not to be moved by the Opposition, if it were only to give the House an opportunity of protesting against the alleged atrocity with which the war in Afghanistan was being conducted. In that country our troops were engaged in a war which was calculated to rouse the most vindictive feelings in the hearts of a people of whom it was our true policy to make friends, and to maintain in a state of independence; and even though an Amendment were not moved in reference to any other point in the Address, the House ought, he thought, at all events to be asked to record its condemnation of that portion of the Proclamation of Sir Frederick Roberts in which it was declared that all the Natives of Afghanistan who took up arms to resist would be executed as felons. No more atrocious proclamation had ever emanated from Russia or Austria against people whom they were oppressing. He agreed with every word of the manly speech of his noble Leader; but regretted that the noble Lord had not had the courage to move an Amendment to the Address.

MR. SHAW moved the adjournment of the debate.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY seconded the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." —(*Mr. Shaw.*)

MR. FAWCETT hoped that, before the House rose, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, (seeing that he was in his place) would give some distinct assurance that an early opportunity would be given for discussing the apportionment of the expenses of the Afghan War, and contended that that question was one which could not be conveniently discussed on the Motion of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell), which related to the policy of the war. The right hon. Gentleman might, perhaps, even that evening make a statement to the House as to the payment of those expenses. If he could not make such a statement now, would he say when he could make it?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he thought it was rather unreasonable on the part of the hon. Member for Hackney (Mr. Fawcett) to ask him to make a statement on that subject. He entirely appreciated the spirit in which the hon. Member took up this matter. He honoured the way in which he had always looked after the financial interests of India, and he quite admitted that this was one of those questions which the hon. Member had a right to have information upon; but he must decline, at the present moment, to go into a discussion of the question which the hon. Member invited him to discuss, and he had no statement just now to make on that subject. With regard to the Motion of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) that the debate be now adjourned, he confessed he was very much at a loss to understand what the meaning of the Motion could be. At an early hour of the evening the hon. Member gave Notice that it was his intention to move an Amendment to the Address, making a Vote of Censure upon Her Majesty's Government for not having taken the proper measures for the relief of Irish distress, and, if he recollected rightly, the hon. Member proposed to invite them to discuss certain questions as to the general and landed system of Ireland. If that was the object of the hon. Member, he had ample time to proceed with his observations, as it was only 10 o'clock. After the House had heard what he had to say, they would be able to judge whether it was a matter which could be finished to-night, or whether an adjournment was necessary. The Irish Members did not know what the Government proposed to do, yet they were prepared to take measures which would result in the postponement for one or two days of the introduction of the Government Bill setting forth remedies, such as they might be, which Her Majesty's Government proposed. He should have thought that was a serious responsibility for Irish Members to take. The Government had taken upon themselves the responsibility to advise the authorities to go beyond the law to meet the distress which unhappily prevailed in Ireland, and they were bound at once to come to Parliament to ask for an indemnity for what they had done. They were anxious to do that at the earliest possible moment, and to state at the same time what further measures they proposed, when they were met with this Motion for an adjournment of the debate, which must interfere with the Business for to-morrow. There would be ample opportunity to express an opinion to-morrow; but if the Representatives from Ireland thought it was more desirable to pass censure on the Government and to air their political speeches than to pass measures of relief, then upon them must rest the responsibility. He should oppose the adjournment.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY said, the question of the action of the Government was one to which it was impossible to do justice at so late an hour. Within the last few minutes official Correspondence of great importance on the subject of Irish distress had been placed in the hands of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw). On those Papers rested the question of the action or inaction of the Government during the last three months. From them Irish Members now had for the first time the opportunity of seeing how far the Government were culpable. As for the insinuation that the Irish Members were postponing measures of relief to Ireland, there might be a little loss of time by the adjournment; but he thought it could be made up in another way. It was perfectly plain, from the inaction which had characterized the Government during the last three months, that neither they nor their administrators had any idea of the responsibility which rested on them, and of the danger which they had created. It was better that they should learn from the Irish Members, after they had contrasted their experience with that now disclosed, what the opinion of the great body of the Irish people was on this important matter, before they proposed a perhaps much too limited measure. For his part, he regarded the proposal to force on the debate as one of the coolest he had ever heard, considering that those who should take part in the discussion were ignorant of the information which had been just placed in their hands, but which they had not had time to make themselves acquainted with. They were, therefore, entitled to ask the House to consent to the adjournment of the debate. He protested against the conduct of the Government, and hoped his brother Representatives would insist that the debate should not be a sham. When the debate did occur it would not be for the purpose of airing speeches, it would not be a sham, it would be something real.

Dr. WARD urged the Government to respond to the appeal made to them to adjourn. He believed that benefit would arise if the matter stood over until to-morrow.

Major NOLAN said, it would be perfectly ridiculous for them to go on. He had looked at the Papers which had been placed into the hands of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw), and he found them to contain most important matter. Seeing that there was much correspondence in them detailing the amount of distress and the manner in which the Government proposed to deal with it, he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not oppose any longer.

Mr. P. MARTIN said, it was admitted that the official Correspondence and Papers which within the last half hour the Government had placed in the hands of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) would be used to justify the actions of the Government, and explain the delay on this point complained of in the Amendment. It was, then, a plain matter of justice Irish Members should be enabled to read and consider those documents. Let the Government, then, listen to reason. It was not fitting that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should taunt the Irish Members as being desirous of speaking for speaking sake, and then refuse the adjournment. If those Papers were of value and to be used, it was surely right Irish Members should have the opportunity of reading them. It was absurd that the House should be now called on to discuss questions in respect to a matter of such grave interest as the distress in Ireland without the aid of those Papers. It was apparent, from the dates, that this Correspondence had been some time printed. Why was it only now given to the hon.

Member for Cork, and not issued in the ordinary way for the general benefit of Members in the House. That was a bad omen. If Government persisted in their refusal to listen to reasonable remonstrance, they would but waste the time of the House, as it was too much wasted last Session from time to time by similar conduct on the part of the Government. When hon. Members showed themselves anxious to conduct the Business of the House in a fair and proper spirit, he said that was the way they were met. They were told they could get up and make speeches to the constituencies. This question was not to be thus treated. Everyone knew the distress was deep and widespread in Ireland. A most strange precedent was about to be set. An Irish debate was hurried on without full information being given. He did press the subject upon the serious consideration of Her Majesty's Ministers, and hoped they would give them reasonable time to consider these important Papers.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY: I think I can give the House a very good reason why this debate should be adjourned, and not carried on as suggested by the Government. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has to-night announced to us that to-morrow he will bring forward a measure which the Government consider will cope with the distress in Ireland, and, possibly, if the measure is satisfactory, the Amendment may not be moved at all; but of all absurd positions for a Legislative Assembly to place itself in, I can conceive none more so than that Notice of an Amendment should be pushed on without Members having the opportunity of judging what steps the Government have taken, or intend to take, on the subject. Common sense shows that the debate should be adjourned. If we had not been told that Papers were to be placed before us which would give us information on the subject, then the debate might very well have gone on; but as circumstances are at present, I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer will agree that a more absurd position than that of the House going on with the debate at the present time, when we have only half the information before us, cannot well be conceived.

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE wished to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Employers and Workmen Bill would be again introduced that Session, and, if so, whether it would be the same as last year? He also wished to know whether the Copyright Bill would be brought forward, and, if so, whether the proposals of the artists who had signed the Memorial would be embodied in it? He would like also to be informed whether the Corrupt Practices Bill would be brought forward, and to know, further, something about the renewal of the Ballot Act?

MR. O'CONNOR POWER said, it was unfortunate that his hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) had not caught the Speaker's eye when he rose early in the evening. If he had, an important debate on the condition of Ireland would have taken place, and the House would have been saved long speeches on foreign policy similar to those they had heard a hundred times before. It would reflect on the conduct of the Irish Representatives if they did not make a protest against the treatment they received in this country. If the House declined the Motion for adjournment, they would be in this position—that the Gentleman who is particularly qualified for speaking on the matter would be precluded from taking part in the debate. He would be unable to speak, because his Motion would be outvoted. These were considerations applying only to the Irish aspect of the question. There were other aspects. They had been engaged since 2 o'clock, and, so far as he could recollect, it was not the practice of the House on the opening night to sit to any protracted period. This, therefore, was a reasonable demand. He was sorry, speaking as one of the Irish Members of the House, that they could not rely upon the co-operation of the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition in bringing Irish questions forward. If they had that co-operation, they would not be in the ridiculous position in which they found themselves at the present moment. He was of opinion that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should not pursue the obstructive tactics which he had announced.

MR. BIGGAR said, the result of the continuance that evening of the debate would be that, instead of one debate to settle the question, they would have half-a-dozen of small debates. Hon.

Members would recollect that the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) was unfortunately precluded from speaking at the hour when an important question of this sort should have gone on, and when it would have received attention in the House and in the Press. The result would be that in any case an adjournment must take place, because there were so many Members from Ireland who had a large knowledge of the state of affairs, and who would speak. The question really was, whether they should adjourn at half-past 10 or half-past 12. He thought the Government had better adjourn now and have the matter properly considered to-morrow.

Mr. MELDON said, he would have been glad had the noble Lord (the Marquess of Hartington) given way earlier in the evening, that they might have heard the hon. Member for Cork's (Mr. Shaw's) views on the subject. He thought now that was a time when the Motion of his hon. Friend should be agreed to. Some little sympathy ought to be shown the people of Ireland; and on that question his experience was that it was not the custom of the House to take the debate the same evening the Address was proposed, but that it should be postponed one or two nights. It had been suggested that the question of Irish Members was not a question of substance, and he admitted the Government would have something to say in defence of their policy of the last six months as one not only of exasperation but of cruelty. He thought it was too late, at 11 o'clock, to commence a debate on the matter. He was sorry that some hon. Members who had taken great interest in the affairs of Ireland were not present to press their views, and he hoped Her Majesty's Government would not attempt to force the matter that evening on that account.

Sir GEORGE BOWYER said, he understood the Motion of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) as a Vote of Censure upon the Government; and he was, therefore, surprised that any attempt should be made to proceed with it until the facts were in the possession of hon. Members. He would suggest that the House should vote the Address and postpone the discussion. He thought they should hear what the Government had to say before they proposed a Vote of Censure upon them.

Mr. Biggar

Sir PATRICK O'BRIEN said, that the attention of every foreign country was directed to the action that Government intended to pursue in relation to the distress in Ireland. He would imagine that the Government ought to be the very first persons to afford facilities to his hon. Friend (Mr. Shaw) to bring forward his case—a case, which, he said, he would be able to make with convincing proof. Instead of doing that, they, for the sake of some two hours' talk, said "No, go on and debate this momentous question in the dark." He scarcely knew words strong enough to use to express his disapproval of the conduct of the Government in reference to this matter. Why should the Government withhold their consent to adjournment? What could be done in respect of discussing the important matters that had been brought forward in the few hours they had at their disposal? Either the Government had, or they had not, a complete and thorough answer, which would show that they had done everything that could be expected of them. If they had, and had brought to bear every engine possible to ameliorate the distress in Ireland, he would be but too rejoiced.

Mr. O'CLERY said, at that hour of the night it was not proper to discuss this matter. Surely, the Motion of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) would bear the light of day, seeing that it was not intended as a Censure on the Government. He agreed with his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Kildare (Mr. Meldon) that it was absurd to proceed with the discussion in the absence of important Papers bearing on the subject which the Government possessed. He could not understand the silence of the front Opposition Bench on this subject. Liberals at that moment were only too anxious to catch the Irish vote, and why none of them should come forward now and aid them in their attempt to get a free consideration of this subject he could not imagine. For them to do so would be the best way to show their good feeling towards Ireland. He sincerely trusted the Government would consider the matter, in order that they might have a full discussion on the subject, and so adjourn the debate.

Mr. REDMOND said, it was only proper that something should be said in reply to the arguments which had been used from that side of the House. He supposed, however, the Government were determined to carry their will by mere numbers, and to give no satisfaction whatever to the Irish Members in their endeavours to do their duty to their constituencies. Their object was an important and solemn one. They were endeavouring to do their duty towards their country by pressing for an adjournment of the debate, not for the sake of popularity, but to insure as far as they could the necessity of the Government fully considering this important question of the distress in Ireland, with a view to its alleviation. It was discreditable that on that, the first night of the Session, the Chancellor of the Exchequer should meet them in the way he had done.

MR. JOHN GEORGE MACCARTHY joined in the appeal which had been made to the Government to consent to an adjournment of the debate. They had to deal with a grave crisis. There was a universal feeling in Ireland amongst men of all classes and parties of the intensest alarm, a feeling of the gravest apprehension, at the present state of affairs. From all districts in the West and South of Ireland the cry of famine was reaching their ears. The gravest alarm existed in the public mind—in the mind of all thoughtful and considerate men—and naturally and properly the Representatives of Ireland, through their Leader, virtually requested permission when they had an opportunity—for that was what it came to—to bring before the House what appeared to them to be of far more importance than any foreign affair or distant war whatever, the distressed condition of their country. They desired to bring before the notice of hon. Members the fact that, at the present moment, they ought to remember that within a few hours' journey of their own doors hundreds of their own fellow-citizens and fellow-Christians were now likely to perish of famine. When the Irish Members took the earliest opportunity, through their Leader, to submit the gravest of Imperial questions engaging the attention of this Imperial House, they were denied permission to do so. They then, at a late hour in the evening, were asked to enter upon that subject. He ventured to say to the House that to so deal with this, the greatest of Imperial questions, was to trifle with it. They in Ireland had been trying year after year to convince those who thought otherwise that there was justice to be had from fair-minded Englishmen—that there was justice to be had from the House of Commons. They would henceforth, if so simple a request as the present were denied, then be deprived of the argument, and they would have to tell their fellow-citizens that when the lives of the people were at stake, when the question at issue was the lives of Irishmen and Irishwomen, it was cast aside for some foreign matter, or in order to consider some distant war, and that, in the next place, an attempt was made at a late hour in the evening to hurry the subject on.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON: Sir, I am very well aware that the question which hon. Members from Ireland wish to discuss—that of Irish distress—is by far the most important one that can come under the consideration of this House. I do not believe that there is any difference of opinion among us on that point, or that it is one which ought not to be fully discussed whenever a proper opportunity occurs. The only question, as it seems to me, is what would be a proper opportunity—what will be the best opportunity—for debating it? In my humble opinion, an unfortunate course has been taken in this matter by the hon. Member for the county of Cork (Mr. Shaw). We learn from Her Majesty's Speech—and I hope there will be no delay in the matter—that the Government are about to make proposals to the House having reference to the measures they have taken, and are about to take, with regard to the distress in Ireland; and therefore, in my opinion, the more convenient course to take would be to wait and hear what the Government have to say upon the matter, and what proposals they intend to submit to the House. The hon. Member for Cork, however, gave Notice, almost immediately after the announcement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, of his intention to move an Amendment to the Address, and we were right in concluding from that circumstance that the hon. Member and his Friends were in a position to introduce the matter, irrespective of any further information which might be laid before the House by the Government. It appears somewhat inconsistent that the hon. Member should announce his willingness to proceed at once with the Motion condemnatory of the Government proceedings, and then demand an adjournment of the debate on the ground that certain Papers are not in his hands. As to my having taken precedence of the hon. Member, and as to the course of the present discussion, it is to be remembered that Her Majesty's Speech refers to a variety of subjects, and that it is desirable and usual that the debate on the Address should be of a general character. Indeed, it is a practice that any hon. Gentleman who wishes to say anything in respect to any one of them should have an opportunity of doing so. Had the present matter been taken early in the evening the discussion on the Address would have been confined to the discussion of the Irish question. Although, as I have already admitted, the Irish question is most important, still it is not the only one referred to in the Royal Speech, and I do not think it would be desirable that the consideration of all the other subjects referred to in the Speech should have been practically put aside in order that that one question should be now debated. Having made these remarks, I can only say that I regard the demand for an adjournment as unreasonable, and I cannot, in justice to the Government, think they are bound to concede it. I cannot help thinking that the course the fairest to the Government and the best for the interests of Ireland is that this important debate should be begun at the most convenient time—that is to say, when we know what the views of the Government in relation to the question are.

Mr. MACDONALD thought the proposition of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) a fair and wise one, and would vote for it. It would enable the House to have a discussion, not as to what the Government intended to do, but what they had done, and whether they had done all they could at right time. The contention of the hon. Member for Cork and his Friends was that it had not been done at the right time.

Mr. J. LOWTHER: Sir, I think the hon. Member who has just sat down (Mr. Macdonald) does not understand the position in which the House is placed. What are the real facts of the case? An Address has been moved in reply to the gracious Speech from the Throne, and it has been stated, in the course of the discussion which has taken place, that Papers showing the course which has been adopted by the Government in Ireland will be—in fact, that they have already been—presented to Parliament, and will be in the hands of hon. Members in a few hours. That is the immediate ground for demanding that the debate should be adjourned. Some hours ago, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) rose in his place and endeavoured to catch your eye, for the purpose of stating his views and submitting an Amendment to the House. He was prepared, apparently, to adopt that course on grounds which commended themselves to his judgment, without waiting for any information whatever, and without having the slightest idea as to the action adopted by the Government. Some hon. Members who have spoken lately, however, have admitted most candidly that they had no reliable information whatever as to that action, and have said that until they were aware of it they were not prepared to express any opinion upon it. In these circumstances, we are asked to adjourn the present debate in order that hon. Gentlemen may make themselves masters of the Papers which have been promised, and which will very shortly, in due course, find their way to hon. Members. The House is aware that on the first night of the Session Papers are promised on almost all matters which have formed the subject of consideration to the Government for many months previously — Papers on the subject of Afghanistan, on the foreign relations of this country, and on other matters. If we were to adjourn the discussion of the debate on the Address until all those Papers are in the hands of hon. Members, I should like to know where we would terminate this initial stage of our proceedings? If this were merely a question of adjourning a debate on an interesting subject for a night or two, I am not prepared to say that there would be any great reason to urge against it; but what is the course which the hon. Member for Cork asks the House of Commons to adopt? He has already been informed that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer is desirous of availing himself of the earliest opportunity of introducing a measure dealing with the question of distress in

Ireland; but that is a measure which the hon. Member and his Friends are desirous, apparently, of pushing far away from us. From past experience, he would be a bold man who would say when a discussion such as the hon. Gentleman wishes would terminate. How long Ireland might have to wait for that measure—a measure affording relief to distress—I certainly should not undertake to say. The position of Her Majesty's Government is this. We announced our intention of introducing a measure dealing with the question of distress in Ireland. We have promised Papers showing the course which we have hitherto adopted. We do not ask the House now to commit itself to the step which we have taken. The Address in reply to Her Majesty's most gracious Speech contains no expression of opinion whatever as to the details of our measures. It merely, so far as I remember its phraseology, thanks Her Majesty for having communicated to Parliament the facts contained in that Speech. Hon. Gentlemen who may entertain certain views as to the omissions or commissions of the Government will be in no way debarred at a future time from expressing their opinions on the subject. The stage of Report upon the Address will come up in the natural course of events to-morrow, and if any hon. Gentleman wishes to state his views, then he will have an opportunity of doing so; or perhaps he had better adopt the advice of the noble Marquess opposite (the Marquess of Hartington), and wait until he is aware of what the action of the Government has been, and until the Chancellor of the Exchequer has introduced his Bill. I think that would be the most convenient course to follow.

MR. JUSTIN M'CARTHY said, the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Lowther) had argued as if it was necessary that the measure which the Government proposed should be carried through all its stages until it received the Royal Assent and became law, before anything could be done to relieve the great distress which existed in Ireland. It would, indeed, be a poor Executive which could do nothing to prevent the starvation of the people until a long and, perhaps, complicated measure had been passed into law. He did not think hon. Members need be alarmed at the prospect held out to them that by adjourning the discussion they were interposing between the Irish people and the projected measure of relief. He thought the right hon. Gentleman himself gave the House very good reason why there should be delay in the discussion. He seemed to throw blame on the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) because he was ready, at an earlier stage of the evening, to give the House his views on the subject without waiting for the Papers promised by the Government. But his hon. Friend (Mr. Shaw) was acting with perfect consistency. The hon. Member for Cork was willing to go on with the discussion at first, because he had not then had the promised Papers, and knew nothing of their existence; but he had subsequently received them, and he saw that they might, perhaps, throw a great deal of new light on the matter; therefore, when he saw that, it was quite natural that he should wish for a little time to fully consider them. He did not think much time would be lost by the concession which the Government were about to give. The noble Lord (the Marquess of Hartington) had said it was usual in the House to have a general discussion on the Address in the first instance. But that was a mere piece of ceremonial which he apparently thought of more importance than a famine threatening a population. He thought the Government would act wisely, and would lose no time, by granting the concession asked to the Irish Members; and he must say he could not but join in the expressions of regret that they had not had the assistance of more English Members in their efforts to obtain the slight concession asked from a somewhat unwilling Government.

MR. SULLIVAN said, the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Lowther) had remarked on the fact that the Irish Members had not waited to learn from the Papers the circumstances of the case; but it was a remarkable fact that there were some 30 or 40 Representatives of Ireland who were so ignorant, having used their eyes and ears in Ireland for the past five or six months, and the Government action had been so secret—so impossible to discover—in the saving of life, that they were charged with ignorance from the Treasury Bench, and were told that in some Papers to be laid on the Table that every revelation would be made. He never heard a more fallacious proposition. If the Government had dealt equitably with the famine in Ireland, then their efforts must be notorious. If their efforts had been efforts of which they knew nothing in Ireland, such efforts were a failure; and they would have Irish Members forget that they were sent there to denounce the inaction—the culpable inaction of the Government during the past six months in Ireland. He was astonished to hear the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition say the question of the adjournment of the debate was a minor matter. They knew very well what the Parliament of England would do if to-morrow an enemy were surrounding our shores, and threatening a hostile invasion. Well, there was an enemy already invading the shores of Ireland, and one which they had historical reason to dread—an enemy that had on former occasions slain, not 10,000 of their countrymen, as in the Battle of Hastings, but an enemy that had whitened the soil of Ireland with the bones of victims to be counted, not by thousands, but by tens and hundreds of thousands; and they wanted Parliament to do in regard to that enemy what it would do if an enemy were menacing its shores with an invasion, and not allow it to waste six months in allowing that enemy to commit such ravages as it had done. They could not go to the Castle gates, and create a noise in the portals. They had to reserve for this occasion the indignation they felt, and the accusation they had against the Government. They wanted Parliament, if it was competent to deal with Irish public emergencies, to say that everything should be suspended until this crisis was adequately dealt with, and that the Minister who allowed the enemy to steal upon us should be adequately censured. He had been urged to insist upon this matter being brought forward at the earliest opportunity; and this course was the more necessary in consequence of the contemptuous indifference with which the Government had treated the representations addressed to them some months ago by three-fourths of the Representatives of the Irish people. He had a bitter recollection of what took place in Ireland in 1846 and 1847. He saw it all, and he recollected the scenes that occurred with horror and indignation. It was said that the Irish nation seemed to have forgotten the noble generosity of the English people in 1846-7. He had never failed to express in Ireland or in England the gratitude the Irish nation should ever remember for the individual action of many private ladies and gentlemen at that time, and had always advised his countrymen to be thankful too; but the secret why this apparent forgetfulness was general was because the Irish people saw that the wealth of the Government was withheld, and that work was thrown upon the inefficacious agency of private charity which the Government themselves should have done. In 1846-7, they saw people perish in Ireland by hundreds—and in his own parish that was so—because they then had a Government almost as inactive as that now presided over by the Chief Secretary for Ireland. In 1846 there was much circumlocution, but nothing was accomplished. They who saw the fearful slaughter then were alarmed now, as they recollected those memories, and compared what they saw then with that which was happening now before their eyes. The Government of itself stood condemned. The hon. Member for Cork desired to discuss this matter, but was not allowed to go on, for the Government told them nothing could be known of what they were doing except through the Papers on the Table. He (Mr. Sullivan) himself felt very strongly on this subject, for Irishmen had reason to feel very deeply on the matter. They did not merely wish to criticize the Government's good intentions; but they wanted to point out the failings of the Government. Last Whitsuntide he and a few other hon. Members stood up in their places in the House and warned the Government that this would occur. They knew that they were speaking to deaf ears. They were charged with exaggeration, and they were told that they were panic-mongers. And now, forewarned and forearmed, what had the Government done? Why, there was not any part of Ireland in which £10,000 or £20,000 had been expended to relieve the distress; and yet Her Majesty's Government, if many of its panegyrists were to be believed, were called the greatest Government in Europe or the world. Let them look at the prompt action of the French Government in the late case of the inundations of the Loire; let them remember the vigorous measures taken by the Austrian and Hungarian Governments when a great flood distressed their country, and compare those instances with the inactivity of Her Majesty's Government. This great, magnificent Government had done so little in seven months, that it could only be discovered by a printed Paper pushed across the Table. He complained—or, rather, he arraigned the Government as guilty before Heaven and that House of being the cause of the misery, the crimes, and disorders in Ireland. He repeated that they were guilty of causing the crimes and disorder in Ireland by not taking the active steps which they ought to have done to meet the distress. The Government knew of the danger before it came, and they could have done seven months ago what they proposed to do next week. But it was only when the voice of passion was heard that the Government began to move. The conduct of the Government in this matter taught them again the lesson that when the Representatives of Ireland tried to urge in a reasonable manner the claims and necessities of their country on the Government they were ignored, and that it was only by the force of passion or despair that the Government could be got to do anything at all.

Mr. A. MOORE said, there could be no doubt of the existence of a deep and generous sympathy felt by hon. Members for the distress in Ireland; but he really did think that hon. Gentlemen near him were placed in a very unpleasant position, this most important question of the condition of Ireland having been pushed on until a late hour. The whole night had been allowed to pass before they could bring the question before the House, when they really ought to have had the matter fully discussed and fully debated. They all knew what the Government could do in the case of an emergency, and they could do just as they pleased. Three years ago the Government, as part of its high-spirited foreign policy, spent £4,000,000 for the purchase of shares in the Suez Canal. There should not have been any delay in putting measures for the relief of Irish distress into execution. He hoped, therefore, that this debate would be adjourned until to-morrow night, so that immediate steps could be taken.

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON said, it was a pity that, instead of wasting time in this discussion on the adjournment, they had not debated the Address, and continued it, if necessary, to-morrow evening. He rose to answer one or two questions which had been addressed to the Government by the hon. Baronet the Member for Chelsea (Sir Charles W. Dilke) in the course of the conversation as to their intentions with respect to certain Bills. He was able to state that the Employers and Workmen's Liability Bill would be introduced in the other House and referred to a Committee. It was not the intention of the Government to re-introduce the Copyright Bill this Session.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 62; Noes 174: Majority 112.—(Div. List, No. 1.)

Mr. SHEIL then moved the adjournment of the House.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Sheil.*)

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: I presume that this Motion is only proposed formally with the view of again moving the adjournment of the debate. I resisted that Motion, because I thought it was rather an occasion for acting instead of talking. However, if the Motion for the adjournment of the House is withdrawn, I will consent to the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. SHAW: I am sorry to say, Sir, that I think the division we have just taken is a very unfortunate commencement of the Session; but it is in no way due to the Irish Members. I intended to ask the House to adjourn this debate, and I privately asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether they would agree to that course. I left them under the impression that they would agree to the adjournment. If they had said "No" distinctly, I should not have hesitated to have moved my Amendment, with a view of partially debating it to-night. Therefore, we have to thank the Chancellor of the Exchequer for what has occurred. The right hon. Gentleman informed us that there were some very important Papers which would be placed in our hands to-morrow morning; and, therefore, I thought that they would at once, in consequence, agree to an adjournment of the debate.

As for myself, I may say that I was prepared to condemn the conduct of the Government without having further information than we have, and, in fact, I took the reference to the Papers which are to be produced as an indication that the Government were anxious to have the debate adjourned. I think I may say that I am not in the habit of interfering unnecessarily in this House, and in what I have done in moving my Amendment I thought that I was discharging my duty, and acting in no other spirit. I feel that I have been placed in a very unpleasant and painful position in consequence of the absence of the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition. He has gone out of the House for some time, and under the circumstances I consider it very unusual. I believe that this has all arisen in consequence of want of precision and decision on the part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If the right hon. Gentleman had decided at once when I asked, I should certainly have resolved to go on with the debate to-night.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I rise, Sir, to claim the indulgence of the House. I must say I cannot understand what the hon. Member for Cork is talking about; but I suppose he refers to a few words he passed with my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland and myself behind the Speaker's Chair. The hon. Member intimated his wish to adjourn the debate, and I replied that the debate could not be adjourned, but that the wished-for discussion could be entered into on the Report on the Address to-morrow, when a statement would be made as to the plans of the Government. The hon. Member did not seem to be contented with that, which was all that was said. I had certainly never said that I was in favour of the adjournment of the debate. I am sorry that any misunderstanding should have arisen, for I have always found the hon. Gentleman straightforward in his dealings with the House. But I think that it is highly inconvenient that these private conversations should be made the subjects of discussions in the House; because the disclosure of them will make it difficult for others to take place. What I said was, that it would be better to agree to the Address to-night and discuss the condition of Ireland on the Report. If that had been done we should not have lost time, and I could have made my statement as to the intentions of the Government in moving the Report. I now consent to the adjournment of the debate, and at its close I shall make the statement which I think it my duty to make.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

House adjourned at a quarter
before Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 6*th February*, 1880.

MINUTES.]—*Sat First in Parliament*—The Earl of Ashburnham, after the death of his father; The Lord Skene (Earl of Fife), after the death of his father.

MEDICAL ACT (1858) AMENDMENT BILL.

QUESTION.

THE MARQUESS OF RIPON wished to ask the noble Duke opposite (the Duke of Richmond and Gordon), What were the intentions of Her Majesty's Government with respect to medical legislation this Session?

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND AND GORDON: A Bill on this subject will be introduced in the other House of Parliament. A measure on the question passed your Lordships' House last year, and the Bill of the present year will be referred to the same Committee which considered the measure of last year, in the hope of our being able to legislate on the subject. But, of course, that will depend very much on the progress of the labours of the Committee.

House adjourned at a quarter past
Five o'clock, to Monday next,
Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 6*th February*, 1880.

MINUTES.] — SELECT COMMITTEE — Standing Orders, *nominated;* Selection, *nominated.*

PUBLIC BILLS—*Resolutions in Committee—Ordered—First Reading*—Colonial Chartered Banking Companies * [4]; Partnerships * [26]; Merchant Shipping (Grain Cargoes)* [27]; Spirits in Bond * [42]; Excisable Liquors Traffic (Scotland) * [49]; Companies Acts Amendment * [52].

Ordered—First Reading—Relief of Distress (Ireland) [1]; Criminal Code [2]; Bankruptcy Law Amendment [3]; Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement (Scotland) Act (1875) Amendment * [5]; County Courts * [6]; Lunacy Law Amendment * [7]; Ulster Tenant Right * [8]; Vaccination * [9]; Medical Act (1858) Amendment * [10]; Law of Ejectment Suspension (Ireland) * [11]; Sligo Borough (Ireland) * [12]; Intestates Real Estate * [13]; Local Government Areas (Commission) * [14]; Rating of Towns (Ireland) * [15]; Public Health (Ireland) Act (1878) Amendment * [16]; Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) (Warnings to remove)* [17]; Married Women's Property Acts 1870 and 1874 Amendment * [18]; Political Prisoners * [19]; Poor Law Guardians (Election by Ballot) (Ireland) * [20]; Poor Law Guardians (Ireland) * [21]; Employers' Liability for Injuries to Servants * [22]; Marriage Laws Amendment * [23]; Waste Lands (Ireland) * [24]; Volunteer Corps (Ireland) * [25]; Municipal Franchise (Ireland) * [28]; Employers and Workmen Act (1875) (Extension to Seamen) * [29]; Leases * [30]; Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Act (1870) Amendment * [31]; Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Wales) * [32]; Local Inquiries (Ireland) * [33]; Hypothec Abolition (Scotland) * [34]; Ecclesiastical Dilapidations Act (1871) Amendment * [35]; Sea Fisheries (Ireland) * [36]; Medical Act (1858) Amendment (No. 2) * [37]; Tithe Commutation * [38]; Hours of Polling (Boroughs) * [39]; Entail and Settlement * [40]; Blind and Deaf-Mute Children * [41]; Municipal Corporations (Property Qualification Abolition) * [43]; Married Women's Property (Scotland) * [44]; Landed Proprietors (Ireland) * [45]; Bankruptcy Act (1869) Amendment * [46]; Criminal Code (No. 2) * [47]; Seed Potatoes (Ireland) * [48]; Judicial Factors (Scotland) * [50]; Ancient Monuments * [51]; Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday * [53]; Registration of Voters (Ireland) * [54]; County Infirmaries (Ireland) * [55]; Births and Deaths Registration (Ireland) * [56]; Employers' Liability (Railway Servants) * [57]; Perpetuity Leases (Ireland) * [58].

QUESTIONS.

INDIA—DESPATCH OF 1869—"THE EMPRESS OF INDIA."

SIR H. DRUMMOND WOLFF asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether there exists in the archives of the India Office a telegraphic despatch transmitted to India in 1869, on the responsibility of the Secretary of State, the Duke of Argyll, for communication to the Ameer of Cabul, in which, amongst other titles, Her Majesty the Queen is designated as Empress of India; and, if so, whether the Government are prepared to lay a Copy of such despatch upon the Table?

MR. E. STANHOPE: Sir, the circumstances in which this telegram was sent were these: After the conclusion of the conference with Lord Mayo in 1869, it was decided to send a friendly message to the Ameer, Shere Ali, in answer to one received from him addressed to Her Majesty. A telegram was accordingly prepared by the Political Department at the India Office, and submitted to the Secretary of State for India. The telegram was headed "From the Queen of England," which the Duke of Argyll altered—apparently in his own handwriting—to "the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India," and in that form it was sent to the Ameer. There can be no objection to producing the telegram, if it is thought worth while to do so.

SIR H. DRUMMOND WOLFF expressed a wish that the telegram should be presented to the House in *fac simile.* [*Laughter.*]

AFGHANISTAN—NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE AMEER.

MR. ASHBURY asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether Her Majesty's Government has received any communication from the Indian Government to the effect that official or other documents were found in Cabul, or elsewhere, indicating that the Russian Government, or its agents, had opened negotiations with the late Ameer Shere Ali, or Yakoob Khan, prejudicial to the interests of British India, and in contravention of the documentary understandings between the two Governments that Afghanistan was beyond the sphere of Russian interests or designs?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: Sir, in answer to the Question of my hon. Friend, and also in answer to a similar Question of which Notice has been given on this subject by my hon. Friend the Member for Guildford (Mr. Onslow), I have to say that it is true that certain Russian Correspondence has been discovered at Cabul, and is now in the possession of Her Majesty's Government. It is not, as my hon. Friend will have observed, included in the Papers circulated this morning; and Her Majesty's Government, after very careful consideration, have come to the conclusion that it would not at present be to the interest of the Public Service to produce that Correspondence, or to give any information as to its contents.

Sir CHARLES W. DILKE said, after what occurred yesterday, he would not ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Government were in possession of information which would show the total number of Afghans executed by Her Majesty's Forces since the beginning of October last, and the charges on which they were executed; but he should like to know when the Report stated to be on its way from Sir Frederick Roberts might be expected to be received?

Mr. E. STANHOPE, in reply, said, he could give no definite information on the subject. It might arrive by any mail.

AFGHANISTAN—THE TREATY OF GANDAMAK.

Sir ALEXANDER GORDON asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether he will now lay upon the Table of the House a Copy of the Schedule annexed to the Treaty of Peace concluded at Gandamak on the 26th May 1879, omitted from the Paper laid before Parliament on the 1st July 1879; and, whether he will lay upon the Table of the House a sketch map showing the limits of the districts assigned to the British Government for protection and administrative control, as defined in the schedule above mentioned?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: Sir, we have not received the Schedule in question from India. The House will probably recollect that the precise limits of the districts assigned to the British Government for protection and administrative control were to be defined by a Commission; but from the unfortunate events of September last it is very probable that the work has not been completed; but as soon as a sketch map showing the limits can be laid upon the Table I shall be happy to do it. As to the Schedule, I am not quite sure whether it has been actually prepared, because it depended upon the limits fixed by the Boundary Commission.

MERCANTILE MARINE — LIGHTS ON FISHING VESSELS AT SEA.

Sir EDWARD WATKIN asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether the Board of Trade have considered the memorials presented to them from the fishing interests of Folkestone, Great Grimsby, Great Yarmouth, and other ports, conplaining of the proposed regulations of the Board as respects lights to be enforced upon the owners of fishing vessels at sea; and, whether the recommendations of the memorials will be complied with; or, if not, whether it will be proposed to remit the subject to the investigation of a Select Committee of the House?

Mr. J. G. TALBOT: Sir, my noble Friend the President of the Board of Trade has very carefully considered the Memorials referred to, as well as other similar Memorials from other places, and upon receiving them at once appointed Commissioners to visit certain ports, confer with the parties interested, and investigate and report upon the whole subject. That Report has not yet been received, but is, I understand, in a very forward state. Until it has been received and considered, it would not be possible to give a more definite answer to the Question of the hon. Member.

APPOINTMENT OF THE REGISTRAR GENERAL—DR. FARR.

Mr. ANDERSON asked the President of the Local Government Board, why, in filling the office of Chief Registrar, the forty-two years' services of Dr. Farr were ignored, and the public deprived of his aid in the new census?

Mr. SCLATER-BOOTH: Sir, I understand from the Prime Minister, whose duty it was to advise the Crown in regard to this office—the office, that is, of Registrar General, not "Chief Registrar," as stated in the Question—that he was satisfied that the state of Dr. Farr's health was alone sufficient to render it inexpedient to appoint him to any arduous and laborious post.

MR. ANDERSON: As I do not consider that answer of the right hon. Gentleman quite satisfactory, I beg to give Notice that I will take an early opportunity of bringing the subject under the notice of the House.

AFRICA (WEST)—THE GOLD COAST.

MR. ANDERSON asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, If it be true that the Governor of the Gold Coast has been acquiring, or endeavouring to acquire, territory from native kings or chiefs by offers of money and rum, and if his proceedings have been sanctioned by Her Majesty's Government?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: Sir, I will endeavour to state what has actually occurred in regard to this matter. There is a point just outside the existing limits of the Gold Coast, where the head of the lagoon that affords water communication with the interior of the Protectorate approaches very near to the sea-shore. It was found that smuggling stations had been for some time established at that point, and the result was a very considerable loss to the revenues of the Colony, which, as the hon. Member is doubtless aware, are mainly derived from Customs' duties. The Governor of the Gold Coast was, therefore, directed to negotiate with the Chiefs and people of the district, with the view of including it within the Colony. He has obtained agreements from them to this effect, which are now under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, the terms on which the cession is proposed to be made being an annual payment of about £325, and liberty to import a certain quantity of spirits free of duty. The whole extent of territory ceded is about five or six miles in length, and from one mile to two miles in breadth.

CHINA—THE CHEEFOO CONVENTION.

MR. MARK STEWART asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If the trade clauses of the Cheefoo Convention have yet been ratified; if any communication has been received from Sir Thomas Wade as to the negotiations on the subject of Pekin; and, if he will lay the Papers upon the Table of the House?

MR. BOURKE: Sir, negotiations are going on between Her Majesty's Government and the Chinese Government upon this subject. We have received several communications lately from Sir Thomas Wade. The negotiations are not yet completed, and, of course, until they are completed, it would be premature to state their purport to the House.

RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND)—THE LONGFORD UNION.

MR. JUSTIN M'CARTHY asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Whether the Longford Board of Guardians applied early in last December to the Local Government Board for Ireland to have Longford Union included in the Schedule of Unions in which loans were offered to landowners on special terms, stating that employment would be necessary to prevent distress, and that the landowners of the union were willing to provide the employment if afforded the special facilities for borrowing; whether the Local Government Board refused this application, several proposals from landowners for loans being then actually before the Board of Works; whether the guardians repeated their application, advising the Board that distress was increasing and would soon become serious; whether the application being again refused the guardians addressed a remonstrance to the Local Government Board and sent a memorial to the Lord Lieutenant; whether since the last rejection of the application severe distress has been reported from several districts in the Longford Union; whether this distress and the consequent necessity for demands on public charity might have been prevented if the application of the guardians had been complied with at first; whether the Scheduled Unions are not chiefly those in which meetings in favour of land reform have been held; and, if he would state why relief has not been afforded to Longford?

MR. J. LOWTHER: Sir, I saw the hon. Member's Question only this morning, and have not, therefore, been able to refer to the authorities for the information which is necessary in order to answer it properly, so that I fear I may be unable to answer it quite in the terms in which it is put. But I remember that the Longford Union did make application to be added to the Schedule of Unions in which loans were offered to landowners. This Memorial was, according to the usual practice, referred to the Inspector of the district by the Local Government Board, and, acting on his recommendation, the application was refused, the Local Government Board being of opinion that there was no exceptional distress in the district to warrant it. The Guardians did repeat the application. I understand, also, that a further application was made direct to the Lord Lieutenant, who, after a careful consideration of the subject by the Irish Government, returned an answer to the Memorial. The hon. Gentleman asks me later on whether severe distress has been reported from several districts in the Longford Union since the last rejection of the application. Representations have been made from time to time of the prevalence of distress in that and other Unions, and those representations have been, in accordance with the general practice, referred by the Local Government Board to the local authorities. The hon. Member asks me further whether the Scheduled Unions are not chiefly those in which meetings in favour of land reform have been held. I believe it to be the case that the promoters of meetings on the subject of land tenure have very generally called them in districts which, on account of the distress prevailing in them, have been added to the Schedule; but I need scarcely say that the action of the Government was in no way influenced by the proceedings of those or any other meetings.

RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND)—THE PAPERS.

THE O'DONOGHUE: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman, When the Papers on the Irish distress, which were so freely promised last night, will be in the hands of hon. Members?

MR. J. LOWTHER: I believe the utmost despatch has been used with regard to these Papers. They are, however, in the Department of the Treasury, and not in my own; but I understand that an arrangement has been made by which hon. Gentlemen shall have them this evening, though in the ordinary course of things they would not be distributed until to-morrow.

GREECE—THE PAPERS.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN asked, When the Greek Papers, promised yesterday, would be in the hands of hon. Members?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, in reply, said, he could not answer off-hand, as the Question was connected with the Foreign Office, and not with his Department; but he understood that the Papers would be ready very soon.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [SECOND NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [5th February.]—[See page 69.]

Question again proposed.

Debate *resumed.*

MR. REDMOND said, that as the Forms of the House precluded the hon. Member for the county of Cork (Mr. Shaw) from moving the Amendment to the Address of which he gave Notice last night, he rose to move it in the hon. Member's place. That Amendment contained two distinct charges against the Government. One was, that although they received timely and ample notice of what was about to happen they failed to take adequate measures for the relief of the distress which most unquestionably existed among a large proportion of the population in many parts of Ireland, bringing the people, in many cases, to the very verge of starvation. The other charge was that they had not indicated any intention to deal with the system of land tenure in Ireland, which was believed to be at the root of the constantly recurring disaffection and distress. With regard to the last charge, there was no dispute or question as to the fact. The Government did not profess any intention to deal with the system of land tenure in Ireland, and so deeply impressed were the Irish Members with the paramount necessity for such action that that consideration alone would amply justify in their minds the Amendment of which Notice had been given by the hon. Member for Cork. They felt it incumbent upon them to take every opportunity of protesting in the strongest manner in their power against the neglect of the responsible Ministers of this country to take cognizance of public opinion in Ireland. They strongly protested against the system of government which was carried on, not in recognition of, but entirely ignoring, the demands which were made from one end of the country to the other. It was utterly impossible that the system of land tenure which prevailed at the present moment, and which, rightly or wrongly, was considered to be at the root of all the evils resulting from constantly recurring distress in Ireland, could remain unchanged. Justice might be done to the tenant, security of the holding might be obtained for him, without the violation of any principle of right, and without inflicting any injury or hardship upon any landlord or owner of property in Ireland. He thought it right to warn the House and the Government that if they made no attempt to arrive at a reasonable and practical solution of this question, other attempts, based, perhaps, upon extravagant and revolutionary theories, would be made, and the result would be that when the Government should at last be compelled to take action they would find themselves very much embarrassed. The blame for this would rest entirely upon the Government themselves for having constantly ignored the constitutional expression of the grievances of the people of Ireland. There had been no revolutionary proposals that had not been begotten of despair of constitutional reforms. If a Communist propaganda should be established in Ireland, which he hoped would never be the case, it would be due, not to constitutional agitation for constitutional rights, but to unconstitutional neglect and ignoring of the public opinion of the country. It was possible that the Government and the majority of this House did not feel the reality of the discontent; but they must know that of the 600,000 tenant farmers in Ireland 500,000 were convinced that all their misfortunes, and the famine, and distress were due to the system of tenure of land. But the Government and this House turned away their eyes and shut their ears, and what was the consequence? So long as that was the case, the Government could not anticipate anything else but continued discontent and an utter want of sympathy with the people. The one hope for the future welfare of the Irish people was that the time would come when the objects and feelings of the Imperial Government would be in harmony with those of the people whom they governed. The Government were doing nothing to bring about that; and on every occasion on which they could the Irish Members would protest against a line of policy which was inconsistent with the tranquillity, the prosperity, and the best interests both of Ireland and of the whole Empire. With regard to the first part of the Amendment he would make only a few observations. Like every Member of that House, he expected that they should have received the Papers promised by the Government the night before; but they had not received those Papers. The Government said that they had done everything necessary, and that they had taken all the measures which were required to meet the emergency; but the reply to that was the terrible condition of Ireland, and accounts which they received from all quarters of the state of affairs bordering on famine. Men and women had already died for want of food within the last few weeks, and many others had entered into the initial stages of the horrible disease of famine. The condition of Ireland was well known, not only from Inspectors and local authorities, but they had received reports from newspaper correspondents and from the relief committees all over the country. It was no use to rely solely on the reports of Inspectors, and ignore other sources of information. Then what were the Government measures which had been so much spoken of? At an early stage they recommended the Board of Works to make advances to landowners and others for the purpose of making improvements. Well, that was a failure. He should like to know how many people had really been employed by means of these loans in the worst districts of the country, and he should like to see how many people had been saved from starvation by the action of the Government? The Board of Guardians had been directed to lay in stores of food and fuel; but he should like to know whether those stores had been distributed? He did not know of a single Union that had distributed relief in kind; but he knew this—that but for the great charity of private individuals thousands of people would have starved. He should like also to know what had been the result of the other measures about which so much had been said? The fact was that they knew nothing about what the Government had done. They only knew that there was great distress in Ireland, and that the destitution of the people was of the most awful character. The only relief that had been given was from the hands of relief committees, and not from the Government. It appeared to him that the part the Government had taken was like that of a medical officer who stood over a man being flogged to stay the punishment when the last limit had been reached. He would not further detain the House, and he would simply move the Amendment of which Notice had been given by his hon. Friend the Member for Cork.

THE O'GORMAN MAHON seconded the Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the Question, to add the words, "We also think it right to represent to Your Majesty that Your Majesty's Government, although in possession of timely warning and information, have not taken adequate steps to meet promptly and efficaciously the severe distress now existing and increasing in Ireland; and we are of opinion that, in order to avert the horrors of famine from a wide area in that Country, the most vigorous measures are immediately necessary; and we are further of opinion that it is essential to the peace and prosperity of Ireland to legislate at once and in a comprehensive manner on these questions; and we humbly assure Your Majesty that we shall regard it as the duty of Parliament, on the earliest opportunity, to consider the necessary measures for the purpose, more urgently the tenure of land, the neglect of which by Parliament has been the true cause of constantly recurring dissatisfaction and distress in Ireland."—(*Mr. Redmond.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR. SHAW said, he hoped the House would allow him to express his regret that any misunderstanding should have taken place between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and himself as to the adjournment of the debate on the previous day. He was quite willing to admit that it might have been his fault; but he had been so much lately in the London fogs that it took a few days to clear his intellect. He was sure that the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition would not consider that any discourtesy had been intended when he (Mr. Shaw) attempted to interpose between the noble Lord and the House. He believed that it was the ancient practice to move Amendments on the Address much more frequently than now. He did not see any constitutional or any other reason why that practice should not be continued. Of course, there could be no objection to a general conversation on political questions, provided there was not before the House an Amendment of a very serious nature; and it had occurred to some of them that, as a Notice had been given of an Amendment on a subject of pressing importance—namely, Irish distress—the noble Lord (the Marquess of Hartington) might have given way and allowed them to have the precedence. But the noble Lord had no doubt acted according to the usual practice of the House, and he might say for himself and his Friends that they had nothing at all to complain of. The noble Lord occupied very nearly as difficult a position in the House as he did himself; and he might be excused for saying that the noble Lord always performed his duties with the greatest ability and the greatest moderation. The hon. Member for Belfast (Mr. J. P. Corry), in seconding the Address last night, had paid him some passing compliments. The hon. Gentleman said that no one out of a lunatic asylum would invest money in the South and West of Ireland. Well, he supposed he might regard himself as an occasionally sane man. Yet all the money he possessed was invested in the South of Ireland; and he had no hesitation in saying that if he had five times as much he would go into business and invest it in land in that country, where capital was just as safe and as remunerative as in England. Manufacturing industry in Cork did just as badly in bad times and as well in good times as it did in Belfast, and there had not been the slightest difficulty with the workpeople. He had been engaged in industrial works in Cork and the west of the county, where a large number of hands, the sons of small farmers, were employed, and those works had been carried on just as successfully as in this country, and without any difference with the men. He said, without hesitation, that in proportion to their population there was just as much local money embarked in trade and industry in Cork and in Dublin as in Belfast. The Belfast people thought very highly of themselves. But there were other places besides Belfast. The annual value of the entire linen trade of Ireland was £8,000,000, whilst the value of the manufactures of the parish of Halifax, in Yorkshire, was £13,000,000. Therefore, the people of Belfast should not be so bumptious. In the North of Ireland, however, they had different Land Laws from those in other parts of the country. The tenants had security, and their savings went into the banks, thus encouraging industry. Tenant right was the foundation of the prosperity of Ulster. In some of the organs of the Press he had seen an account of an interview between the Prime Minister and one of his followers, where the foreign policy of the Government was fully discussed, and he thought that must have referred to the hon. Member for Belfast (Mr. J. P. Corry). The words which that hon. Member used last night were almost identical with those which fell from the Prime Minister on the same evening in "another place," and evidently the two personages must have laid their heads together. He could imagine their devising for the next General Election the cry of "Disraeli and Corry, and the integrity of the Empire!" He himself, speaking at a meeting in Dublin a few weeks ago, made a bad joke about taking out a linch-pin—a joke so bad, that the newspapers in this country absolutely thought he was serious, and some remarks on it appeared in a leading article next day. Well, he had happened to walk to the place of meeting with a Belfast man, and it was impossible for him, after such an experience as that, to make a good joke. Turning, however, to the Papers about to be produced by the Government, it was unfortunate that they were not in the hands of hon. Members. He had expected to receive them that morning. But the Amendments which had been moved and seconded condemned the Government, not for what they were going to do in the future, but for what they had not done in the past. It would be extraordinary if they had done anything wonderful in regard to carrying out works to relieve distress in Ireland, and yet that the whole community should never have heard of it. He complained that the Government had had timely warning of the distress which was coming upon the people of Ireland. The last harvest was exceptionally bad; there was a deficiency in the crops, the crops did not ripen, and fuel as well as food failed. All that could not but entail the severest distress in many parts of the country on the small farmers with 10 or 15 acres. Even the larger farmers had been working against three or four bad years, which, of course, took away their savings and swept off the means they had laid up. It was, therefore, absolutely certain that there would be great distress in the winter. The Government, with its various sources of information, must have known everything which those who lived in the country knew, and known it a great deal better, because its information was not confined to particular districts. In October the Local Government Board sent out Inspectors, who visited the different Poor Law Unions; and on the 8th of October he believed that Board sent to the Government an official statement as to the state of the country, distinctly showing that the distress would be wide-spread. After that the Roman Catholic Bishops—interested in the temporal as well as the spiritual welfare of their flocks, and possessing the very best means of information—waited on the Lord Lieutenant and laid the state of the country before his Excellency. The reception given to that deputation was, he understood, anything but satisfactory. After that Memorials went in from almost every Poor Law Union and Corporation calling the attention of the Government to the imminent distress. Seventy Members of Parliament also signed a Memorial to the Prime Minister asking that, if necessary, Parliament should be summoned to give the Executive full power to meet the emergency. No answer was given to that Memorial. In fact, the noble Earl rather scoffed at the Irish distress before the citizens of London, when he met them at a great dinner party. Well, then, it could not be said that the Government had no notice of the serious state of the country. Now, he wanted to know what they had done? He should be very glad if the Papers about to be produced showed that the Government had honestly done their duty, and that the present Amendment might be withdrawn. No man living in the country but wished to see the Government do its duty, as it was bound to do, towards the people. It was in that spirit that all those Memorials had been presented. Their purport was that money should not be given in alms, that nothing should be done to pauperize the people—they had had enough of that; but that money should be expended in some way for employing them on useful reproductive works. The Government in November issued a Circular to the Poor Law Boards, directing them to take steps for cleansing the poorhouses and for providing plenty of blankets. Now, he ventured to say that was not enough, as far as the Poor Law system was concerned, or anything like enough. They ought to have directed the Poor Law Board that in case there was anything like real distress it should at once be promptly relieved. They might very safely trust the Guardians in Ireland not to do too much in that direction, for the Guardians in Ireland were generally land owners and land occupiers, and they looked very carefully after the rates. Therefore, the Government might be quite sure they might trust the Guardians not to go too far. He believed that when the distress occurred in Lancashire those who represented the Government there did not hesitate at once to go beyond the law, and did all they could to keep the poor people out of the workhouse. No greater calamity could befall a poor man than to allow him to become, even temporarily, and in exceptional cases, a pauper. Therefore, a wise and paternal Government should strain every nerve to prevent anything like this happening. There was a case in Sligo in which a Board of Guardians had been told that over 100 persons were absolutely starving, and they at once, without thinking of the law, ordered relief; but they were promptly prohibited by the Local Government Board, and probably the money expended, pending the arrival of the order, they had had to pay out of their own pockets. The next thing the Government did was to issue a Circular saying they would advance money to gentlemen who wished to drain their land, and that Circular met with general satisfaction; but when they saw the order they found it was nothing at all. The only advantage offered by that Circular was that interest would be postponed for two years, and that the time of repayment of the loan would be extended a little. The interest would be added to the principal, and probably interest upon interest would be added; but the landlords in Ireland could not be induced to take much money on those terms. The Government on the 12th of January, finding the thing hang fire, issued another Circular, in which they did offer substantial advantages, offering money at 1 per cent interest. If this offer had been made in the first instance, there would have been an amount of employment in the whole West and South of Ireland that would have met almost the entire case. Of course, there would still have been plenty of room for charity in a poor country like Ireland. For himself, he had no hesitation in offering his meed of praise to the Duchess of Marlborough and the Lord Mayor of Dublin for their great exertions in the matter of private benevolence. There could be no question that the idea that this lady had any political motive in organizing or distributing her fund was perfectly absurd. But he was wrong —he believed, after all, she had a political motive. She must have been so disgusted with the shilly-shallying of the Government, with the evidence of indecision which she witnessed every day, with the official red-tapeism and eternal letter-writing, with the frequent journeys of the Chief Secretary between Dublin and London, that she said to herself "I will do my duty at all events." The Government had not acted in time in making advances to the country gentlemen in Ireland. They might also have gone somewhat further. The law in Ireland only allowed advances for drainage to be made to owners of land or tenants with more than 40 years' lease to run. He (Mr. Shaw) had made a suggestion to the Government which he was now almost sorry he had done. It so much shocked the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland that he was afraid it might have injured his health. He had proposed that advances should be made to tenants to enable them to drain their own lands, where notice was first given to the landlords, and they did not object. His reason for this proposition was that, unfortunately, in Ireland there was a large percentage of absentee landlords, and also a number of gentlemen who did not feel themselves called upon to make great exertions for the employment of the people. There were hundreds and thousands of acres, not of waste, but of improveable land that the tenants, if they could borrow the money, would themselves drain, and soon double its value. The money would be just as safe as in any other case. Indeed, in almost every instance, the interest of the money advanced was paid by the tenant. But the Government would not entertain this proposal. He had received a letter from one of the most respectable and influential country gentlemen in his own county, who had been for many years a Chairman of a Board, and who was, moreover, a good Conservative. That gentleman gave a most deplorable account of the people in his district. They were small farm labourers and had now consumed almost all their food. The farmers paid them some 3*s.* a-week and gave them houses —such as they were—the liberty to cut fire-wood, and land on which to cultivate their potatoes. All the produce of that land had been consumed, and hundreds of families in that district were living, or rather starving, on 3*s.* a-week. Starvation was a gradual process that went on for months. It was going on now, and the hand of the paternal Government had not yet been stretched out to relieve in any effectual way. He knew that in his own parish in the country there were some 80 farm labourers, 40 of whom were almost helpless and dependent upon casual employment, which was scarce enough, as no money was in circulation and the farmers could hardly pay their own way. He hoped the Government would even now take prompt measures to remedy this state of things. They ought at once to issue instructions to the Poor Law Guardians to give out-door relief without insisting upon the observance of the law in its present state. A Bill of Indemnity could be brought in afterwards, and it would be passed by the House without the slightest trouble. This, further, ought to be the settled state of the law. There were districts in Ireland where poverty occurred when it did not occur in other districts. An immense number round the coasts were engaged in fishing, and often for weeks together they were in a state of destitution. There ought to be a power in the Local Government Board to enable such assistance to be given to these people as would prevent them being driven into the poorhouse. The Government had issued a Circular to provide for the holding of special sessions through the country in order to carry on relief works. He believed this course to be a dangerous one. Many of them remembered the famine of 1846-7, and the amount of money that was thrown away then upon works. It had demoralized the people for years after. They did not want to see that kind of thing repeated. No doubt landlords would scarcely be able, even with the help of the Poor Law, to give the people all the work that was required. But why should these sessions not have power to do some useful works, such as the making of railways, the deepening of harbours, or such like things? It would be replied that these matters were best left to private enterprize. That language was good for England and Scotland, where there was so much money that the people did not know what to do with it; but the case was different with poverty-stricken Ireland. It ought to be permitted to these sessions, wherever it could be shown that useful and productive work was to be done, that they should apply for it, and then borrow the money to carry it on. He had also to complain that although they were promised that red-tape was to be burned, upon this occasion it had not been burned. Gentlemen complained to him that they had as much difficulty as ever in getting their applications for loans passed through the Board of Works. He did not want the Government to lose a shilling; but they might easily do much to facilitate the granting of loans. He should not trouble the House by entering at length into the question raised by the Amendment as to the permanent sources of distress; but he must say that he felt, as one who had always lived in Ireland, that it was an intolerable thing, in the most prominent degree discreditable to England, a fact of which England ought to be ashamed, that in Ireland, a country at their very door, the state of things was such that a large proportion of the people were suffering from famine. Was this what English statesmanship had achieved? Was it possibly true that within immediate reach of that assemblage of English Gentlemen, statesmen and merchants, a whole people were in such a state that a few bad harvests left them a prey to famine? If this were so, it was a disgrace. It would be said that it was the fault of the people of whom he spoke. The hon. Member for Belfast said it was to be attributed to the agitators. There never was an agitator yet who had power except springing from real grievances and wrongs; and if he were given the power to tell one of the largest meetings in Ireland that the English Government had determined to act, without prejudice, justly and fairly, he would engage to put down agitation. But the course of Irish affairs was this. First, there was great want, then followed excitement and disturbance, and this was followed by coercion. The Government had been trying, and in many cases honestly, to grapple with these evils; but it occurred to him—and this was one of the principal meanings of the existence of Home Rulers as a Party—that the Government of England very often had much more in their minds their own Party complications than the real grievances of Ireland. History was repeating itself. The former Irish Famine was made an excuse for carrying out a great political problem affecting the whole of the Empire. At the present moment the great political Party opposite was trying to blacken that on the side on which he sat, with an eye to the next General Election, and were careless as to the existing famine in Ireland. They were determined to put a stop to this without giving the slightest offence to any Party or to the English people. They would endeavour, as far as they could, constitutionally and fairly, to force on the minds of the Members of the House the real state of Ireland, and to bring about an improvement in the present state of things. The problem was great and difficult; but it was not insuperable. It was one on which, if a statesman undertook it honestly and justly, he would have the entire approbation of the whole of the Irish people. It might, perhaps, appear unseemly that they should interpose in this way between Her Majesty and the Address to be presented; but they had been taught lately that the Sovereign was to be a real factor in the political Constitution. Thus, then, they came to the Sovereign, to whom he professed nothing but the most complete loyalty, and asked for a full consideration of their grievances. The Government had been putting on her brow an Imperial diadem while her subjects in Ireland were dying and starving—a state into which they had fallen by the injustice of the laws, which laws they now asked to be remedied. A Resolution had been placed on the books of the House, pledging Parliament to an amendment of the Land Laws; but the Government had never thought it worth while to take a step in that direction. They had endeavoured to impress on the House the necessity of extending to the South and West of Ireland the same law which existed in the North, and which had made the North of Ireland what it was. This the Chief Secretary for Ireland had not thought it beneath his position to describe as Communism. How could they go to the people of Ireland and say the Government meant to do anything permanently useful in this direction? The present Government had the power to do much, but he had not the slightest hope from them, owing to the tenour of the passage in the Queen's Speech, which simply meant that they intended to do nothing; and, in fact, he believed that the Irish Government was not controlled by enlightened English opinion, but by the narrow-minded opinion of the people of the North of Ireland, and that this was the main factor in the government of Ireland.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, I rise immediately after the hon. Member for Cork principally to say that I have no fault to find; but, on the contrary, I think that he is entirely within his right, and is to be commended for taking the earliest opportunity of drawing the attention of the House to the question which he has brought before them. And I am not at all prepared or disposed to take exception to the spirit in which he has addressed to us the remarks he has made upon what he supposes to be the negligence or want of foresight on the part of Her Majesty's Government. No opportunity could be more proper for calling attention to such a matter than the Motion for the Address to Her Majesty. No opportunity could present itself earlier, and certainly it is both the right and the duty of Members for Ireland to take this opportunity of calling attention to a matter of such importance. If anything passed last night which led them to believe that we were indisposed to have a discussion on that subject, I can only say that it is due to a misunderstanding which I regret.

It is the earnest and sincere desire on the part of Her Majesty's Government to bring forward without delay and submit to Parliament the measures they think it right to propose on that important question. I will say but a very few words upon the latter part of the hon. Gentleman's speech. Undoubtedly, when he calls upon us to consider what are the evils at the root of the social system in Ireland, and when he tells us that those evils are to be found in the system of Land Laws, and that it is the duty of Parliament and Her Majesty's Government to devise permanent remedies for that state of things, he raises a very large and important question. It is a question which has occupied the attention of Parliament not long since. It was a matter brought a few years ago very prominently under the consideration of the last House of Commons. It was discussed, and legislation was agreed on, and, undoubtedly, we have had many occasions to know how that legislation worked. I think it is highly probable that the subject will be raised again and again; and what I wish now to say is that I think at the present moment, and with reference to the particular questions of the distressed condition of Ireland, I should be going altogether aside of the question by occupying the House with the points the hon. Gentleman alluded to at the conclusion of his speech. Whatever views may be adopted respecting the tenure and distribution of land, such questions are beside the immediate question of the moment—How are people to be maintained during the present season, and what are the most efficient methods of preventing starvation? It is from no want of respect to the hon. Gentleman and the importance of his speech that I abstain from entering upon it at the present moment. The hon. Gentleman charges the Government with having, in spite of warnings and ample information, neglected to take sufficient measures for warding off famine and great suffering. Well, I dispute that proposition. I say that the course which the Government has taken has been—at all events, in their own judgment—that which was best calculated to accomplish the object which we all have in view. Most distinctly do I deny that there have been any *lâches* whatever on our part. We may be mistaken in the measures we are adopting, but we certainly have not allowed the matter to sleep. As early as the beginning of September the question of the condition of the country, and what was the nature of the harvest, and what were the prospects of the country, had engaged the attention of the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and at that time they had begun—and I submit it was the only course they could then take—to make inquiries of a systematic character into the condition of the people of Ireland, and as to the nature of the steps that might be taken to relieve the distress. We availed ourselves of all the sources of information open to us—many of them of a confidential character—in order to obtain correct and early information. The inquiries were, of course, varied in their nature, but were very minute and well diffused over the whole country. We endeavoured to ascertain the position of the tenants and the general population, particularly in those districts that we had reason to believe were affected by the distress. I may mention very briefly, as I should have done in bringing forward and justifying the measure which I hope to submit to the House, what is the result of the communications that have been made, and I desire especially to proclaim the result of the inquiry made by the Registrar General into the agricultural condition of the country. I am sorry to say that his Report, which was called for at an unusually early period on account of the anxiety felt with regard to the season, shows a very unsatisfactory state of things. It states, in the first place, that the extent of land in Ireland under crops was less in this year than in any of the preceding 10 years, and it goes on to show how the yield was affected. The Agricultural Produce Returns for this year are, in truth, of a very unfavourable character, the estimated produce being lower than in any of the past 10 years. In 1878 the harvest was up to the average, and the yield of many crops was above it. This year the yield of each crop is under the average of the past 10 years. The extent to which this is the case is measured by taking the value of the crops. In 1879, the total value of the principal crops of Ireland may be taken at £22,743,000, as against £32,758,000 in the preceding year, showing a diminution of £10,000,000. We have documents which show very minutely in what particular directions the failure may be looked for, and which point to this very unsatisfactory result. With regard to the potato crop, in 1878 the estimated produce of potatoes in Ireland amounted to 50,500,000 cwt., the average for the last 10 years being 60,652,000 cwt., whereas the estimated yield for 1879 is only 22,273,000 cwt.; a most alarming decrease. I will not multiply instances in order to show that this has been a most trying and disastrous agricultural year, and that the effect of such a state of things upon a country so dependent upon agriculture must be of a very serious character. [Mr. SYNAN: What is the date of the Report?] This Report is dated the 4th of February, and it has only just been received. It is the "Preliminary Report of the Returns of Agricultural Produce in Ireland for 1879." I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman wishes to learn whether we were in a position to supply this information earlier. We were certainly not in possession of it in the form and shape in which this has been given; but, from the local inquiries which we made, we had ascertained the fact that there had been serious failures in certain localities, and we were able to form a pretty fair estimate of the nature of the depression, and the pressure on certain districts. We were not, however, in possession of the actual figures. Well, as I have already stated, in the month of September information began to be collected; and I can bear my personal testimony, having been in Ireland some time towards the end of that month, to the great care and attention which everyone connected with the Irish Government bestowed in getting all the information possible. The result of our communications was this—that towards the end of October the Irish Government forwarded to us the information which they had obtained through the various inquiries instituted by the Local Government Board. The Government at home then considered the matter most seriously, and not only examined the Reports which had been sent to them, but invited the Lord Lieutenant and various gentlemen who were particularly qualified to express an opinion to attend in this country. Repeated personal communications took place with them, and we obtained a great deal of valuable information, and were able to express our views to those who were charged with the administration of the Poor Law in Ireland. When we came to consider the question, what we found was this — that, undoubtedly, there was considerable apprehension and danger of scarcity in certain parts of Ireland. We found, however, that there were other parts where the crops had not been so deficient. In some places, indeed, they had been comparatively abundant. But there were many parts of the country where it would be necessary to take special precautions, and we naturally inquired what precautions would be most valuable. Four points came under our consideration. That which immediately suggested itself was this—supposing that the failure in the fuel harvest prove as serious as has been expected, will there not be a danger of the actual supply of fuel being withheld, and of there being no means of replacing it in certain districts? This, it was obvious, would be a most serious evil, and the people would not only be subjected to the great discomfort of not being able to maintain proper fires, but they would be unable to provide for cooking their food, and a deficiency of fuel in winter might be productive of great inconvenience and also disease. It became, therefore, a matter of the greatest importance to assure ourselves on that point. Well, we inquired whether fuel could be obtained if necessary, and we were assured that proper precautions would be taken so that stocks of fuel would be available in case of need. Another question now arose—namely, how far did the law admit of the distribution of fuel? and we found that under no circumstances did there seem to be any power to distribute fuel. The Government, while thinking it undesirable to make any public announcement, considered it right to warn the Local Government Board that they must keep themselves properly informed from week to week as to the condition of the country and the prospects of any alarming demand for fuel, and instructed them, if any occasion should arise making it necessary to distribute fuel or food, immediately to report the circumstances at head-quarters, whence authority would be given them to go beyond the law. There was no necessity for making any public announcement upon the subject. It was, in fact, far better that there should not be a public announcement. We are now, happily, in telegraphic communication with every part of the country. There is, consequently, no difficulty whatever in obtaining information up to the latest date, and no difficulty in transmitting orders, provided you have made up your mind as to what your orders shall be in case of an emergency. We had thus satisfied ourselves as to our ability to get an abundant supply of information; we knew exactly what we should do to order the distribution of what might be necessary to preserve life, and we were assured that the means of fulfilling our orders existed. Therefore, we considered that we had taken the precautions necessary until the meeting of Parliament, when we should have an opportunity of describing our position. In the Bill which I shall by-and-bye have to ask the House for leave to introduce, there will be a provision authorizing the Local Government Board to give authority to the Boards of Guardians to issue food or fuel by way of out-door distribution. At present, out-door relief is confined by strict rules, adopted after careful consideration, to cases arising when the workhouse is full, and it cannot be given to those who are occupiers of more than a quarter of an acre of land. We thought that, under the circumstances of to-day, these conditions might be suspended, and power will be asked for in the Bill to make their suspension possible. The House will see that in making proposals of this kind we are acting under a sense of deep responsibility, because the principles of the Poor Law are principles which are adopted with care and consideration, though when they are brought into action they are felt by many persons to be severe and rigorous. This severity was necessary to the maintenance of a proper spirit of self-help and providence among the people. These, however, are circumstances of an exceptional character, and it is only in such cases that you would be justified in departing from the principles of the Poor Law. Then there was another matter which we had to consider. We had to inquire not only into the condition and probable demands of the poor, but we had also to inquire into the condition of the rateable charges on the Unions themselves, and it appeared to us that there were several cases in which the rates charged upon certain districts were heavy; and if the demand which was now beginning to be anticipated should take place, a very heavy additional rate would be thrown upon these Unions; and we could not but feel that this additional rate would be thrown upon them just at a time when those who would have to bear it would be suffering from the common calamity. Some of those who would have to bear the rate would be affected as much in position as those receiving relief in the failure of crops; and we thought that at the same time we were calling on the Unions to make provision for special distress we should provide that they should have power to relieve themselves of the great and sudden pressure on the rate by borrowing for a limited time in order to meet that rate. Therefore, the proposal was made in the present Bill that there shall be power, when a case appears to be made out on the part of the Guardians, with the consent of the Local Government Board, to borrow money to meet this exceptional rate. Well, those were the provisions made to facilitate the action of the Poor Laws. Additional liberty was given them to administer out-door relief, and power was given to Guardians to borrow upon the rates. Then, beyond that, we had to consider what could be done in the way of diminishing the pressure of pauperism by stimulating the employment of labourers. With regard to the stimulation of the employment of labourers, that is one of the questions very full indeed of difficulties. We remembered the years 1846 and 1847, and we know at that time a very large amount of money was unfortunately wasted upon works undertaken without due consideration, and carried on in a manner which necessarily involved very considerable waste. But the question was not one of waste of money. If that were all—that £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 were expended without producing any good result—we might have thought less of that miscalculation; but the fact was a very great evil was done, the people were demoralized, and it was found necessary to take towards the end very strong measures in order to check the evils that were occurring. We were warned by the proceedings in 1846 and 1847 to be very careful how we departed from the principles of the usual system. With regard to the advance of money for encouraging public works in Ireland, the House is aware that it has long been part of the policy of Parliament to encourage various classes of work by the advance of public money on terms somewhat more favourable than can be obtained in the open market. These arrangements have been made, not only in Ireland, but also in other parts of the United Kingdom, and they are arrangements made with a view to promote certain works of a character which are thought desirable—sanitary works, land improvements, and other things which we desired to encourage by advances on favourable terms. The system on which those advances are made is one that has been, and still is, under very careful review and criticism; and it is perfectly clear that if we are not to break down the whole principles of that system, it is necessary to adhere to them so far as concerns the system of advancing money for the sake of works of advantage, and when you come to the case of employing labour, not so much for the work that is to be done as that labourers may be employed, you get into a new class of considerations altogether, and it is a very difficult thing to combine the two things. We thought that it would be desirable that some further encouragement should be given to the ordinary borrowers who take public money from the State in Ireland, and with that public money execute works, whether in the improvement of their own estates or other works; and we could not but feel that the circumstances of the time, the great pressure which had come upon the landlords from the difficulty of obtaining their rents, and the great losses they were sustaining by the failure in the harvest—that those difficulties must naturally deter landlords from coming forward and borrowing even to the ordinary extent to which they would go—We thought, therefore, it was desirable to make such regulations as might facilitate the borrowing by landlords, and encourage applications which otherwise might not have been made. The first thing that occurred was that one of the great difficulties in the way was that the borrowers did not wish at this particular time to take these burdens on themselves. Therefore, we in November proposed that loans should be made in the distressed districts upon the unusual terms of allowing a delay in the re-payment of the first instalment, and also that we should give certain facilities. It was complained that red tape stood in the way. Red tape is always very unpopular, and it is very easy indeed to cry out that certain formalities should be dispensed with. Of course, we are always desirous of dispensing with unnecessary formalities, whether in cases of exceptional distress or not; but with regard to some "formalities," as they are called, they are such as cannot be dispensed with. Take, for example, proper advertisement, in order to let those interested in a particular estate know that a certain charge is going to be placed upon it. If there were not such advertisements, the persons so interested might say that they had not had notice of the charge, and were not bound by it. However, we have made certain changes, and somewhat diminished the charges. We found under that Order, made on the 14th of November, that applications were made amounting to about £113,000; and we also found that the applications were not being made with the celerity that could be wished; and, therefore, in January, at the suggestion of the Lord Lieutenant, we issued a further Order making a considerable advance upon those terms. The Order was made on the 14th of January for loans for 37 years, instead of 22. For the first two years they are given absolutely free, and no interest is charged and no instalment called for, and under those conditions we have a larger number of applications, applications amounting to £220,000; in all, £333,000. There have been applications for sanitary loans up to the 3rd of February amounting to £79,000. In addition to these two measures we have taken a third measure, and it was to that the noble Lord (the Marquess of Hartington) pointed yesterday, when he said it might be necessary that we should give authority to others besides individual landlords to borrow money. We have adopted a system of extraordinary presentment sessions for the different baronies—I understand about 90 extraordinary baronial sessions are likely to make applications. In these circumstances, we can come to Parliament with confidence and ask for authority to modify the law in respect to these different particulars, and I feel sure that the measure which I shall ask leave to submit is one which will receive the approbation and support of Parliament. It may be in the course of the discussion of that measure that further suggestions will be made which we shall be glad to listen to; but we ourselves are convinced that what we have proposed, if fairly and properly administered, ought to be sufficient to meet the wants of the case. We believe that the Irish Government are fully alive to the necessities of the case. We know that we shall be informed of everything that occurs; and if anything important or urgent should come, we are perfectly prepared on our own responsibility — though now that Parliament has met we should not have occasion to rely on our own responsibility—to take whatever steps are necessary to prevent anything like the calamities which are apprehended in so many quarters. I hope that the times will not be so hopelessly bad as some Members seem to anticipate; but we cannot disguise from ourselves that there is a very serious period to be passed over between the present time and the next harvest. While we must keep our attention fixed on the necessary measures for keeping the people from the great misfortunes which may fall upon them, we have also to bear in mind that we must do nothing that will in any way interfere with the necessary operations of agriculture. We must do nothing that will lead the people away from preparing for the next seed-time and harvest; because we must remember that, on a former occasion, the temptations that were offered by the great public works were such, in many cases, that they drew away the people from their work. We must be prepared to keep all that in view at the same time that we are making special arrangements with regard to relief. I have endeavoured, I hope without any unfairness, to explain to the House what the course of the Government has been, what their views are, and in what way they hope to deal with this question. There is another matter which has not been referred to; and upon which it will be my duty in introducing the Bill to say a few words —I mean with reference to the source from which the money to be advanced for this purpose is to be supplied. I think, perhaps, as the question is one which has not been raised in the discussion, and as it is one which lies apart from the actual work to be done, I shall better consult the convenience of the House by deferring any observations on that point until I have to ask leave to introduce the Bill. Therefore I believe I have now said all that it is necessary for me to say. I can assure the hon. Gentleman opposite that while we recognize his right to bring forward such a Motion, we warmly and even indignantly repel the charge he would seem to make against us of having been careless and negligent in this matter. We have acted according to the best of our judgment, and, as at present advised, we believe the course we have taken is the best for the interests of Ireland.

THE O'DONOGHUE: It is well known to be the duty of the Opposition to criticize unsparingly the conduct of Ministers; but, in the present instance, one feels a certain degree of reluctance in attacking the Government. In dealing with the distress in Ireland, the Government have fumbled and bungled so hopelessly that an utter want of capacity has become evident, and pleads in mitigation of that unqualified censure which otherwise could not be withheld. The little the Government have hitherto done has been wrong in principle, and what it has suggested to local bodies in Ireland to do has created a panic. Up to the present moment all that the Government has done for the relief of distress has been to provide £250,000 out of the Irish Church Surplus, to be lent to landlords for the improvement of their estates. I wish to point out that this mode of affording relief is looked upon with dislike and with grave suspicion by the whole of the occupiers of Ireland; because, no matter what may be the intention of the Government, it is quite evident that the inevitable effect of loans made to landlords for the improvement of their estates must be totally to defeat and render nugatory the principal provisions of the Land Act of 1870. The great aim of the Act of 1870 was to get the tenants to improve, in order that they might permanently better their position—acquiring property in the soil; and, moreover, that by doing this they might throw up barriers against evictions, and it was thought that liability to claims for compensations would operate as a deterrent upon the exterminator. It is quite clear that where these loans have been made to the landlords the tenants will no longer improve. Henceforward the improvements will be made by, and will belong to, the landlords. The tenant's share in the transaction will be the re-payment of the loan in the shape of increased rent. All the occupiers of Ireland see how the proposal of the Government to lend to the landlords for improvements will work; they will see that it must add to their burdens. They see that there is no limit to the rent-raising powers of the landlords, and they see that while the proposal of the Government must lead to these results it actually diminishes the tenant's hold upon the soil by preventing claims to compensation. The House can now easily understand why the occupiers are averse to this mode of relieving distress. Then the plan proposed by the Government places the tenant farmer in a most invidious position. Throughout Ireland there is a general attempt on the part of the landlord party to sow dissension between farmer and labourer. The dislike of the tenant farmers to have the landlord constituted the sole improver is notorious, and the landlords and their agents turn this to account by trying to make it appear that the tenant farmers are throwing obstacles in the way of employment. The farmers are asked—"Do you want to prevent the labourers from getting work and wages?" The farmers unhesitatingly and honestly reply—"It is a foul calumny to say we want to hinder employment; but we object to a system for providing employment which we believe to have been devised to render the Land Act of 1870 quite useless, and to weaken our hold on the soil, and to supply the landlords with additional excuses and opportunities for eviction." I do not now want to create a show of ascribing infamous motives to the Government; but beyond all doubt the scheme of the Government for lending to the landlords for improvement must produce the disastrous results apprehended by the farmers. The proper course for the Government to take is to lend to the farmers themselves for the purpose of improving their farms. The farmers are only trying for the chance of doing this on favourable terms. In this way, a three-fold object will be accomplished. The labourer will be employed, distress relieved, and the position of the farmer strengthened by his accumulation of claims for compensation under the Land Act, and by the interest the State will acquire in the farmer's enjoying undisturbed possession of his holding. I contend that justice and sound policy point out that it is to the farmer the money ought to be lent. In any case, even where you lend to the landlord, it is the tenant who will repay the loan, and it is the farmer who ought to reap the benefit of the improvements. I say that it is incumbent upon us, who are responsible for the well-being of the tenant farmers of Ireland, to resist by every means in our power loans being made to landlords for the improvement of their estates. Disguise it as you please, the policy of lending to the landlords is nothing short of an attempt to secure what for years has been the policy of the Liberal Party in Ireland—to confer upon the occupier security for the possession of his holding—and an attempt to supplant him in his natural avocation of cultivator and improver of the soil. I said that what the Government had suggested to certain public bodies in Ireland had created a panic. Unquestionably it has. The Government advised that in some districts extraordinary baronial sessions should be held, in order to set on foot public relief works for the employment of the people. But at present there is no way of meeting the cost of works instituted by baronial sessions except by levying it exclusively off the occupiers, like the county cess. The prospect of being subjected to these additional liabilities has simply appalled the farmers. As a mitigation of the evil, it has been proposed that the cost of these works should be borne half by the owner and half by the occupier, like the poor rate. This, however, is well understood to afford merely nominal relief, as no fact is better understood in our social economy than this, that sooner or later the occupier pays for everything in the shape of increased rent. Can anything be conceived more absurd in theory, or more disastrous in practice, than this plan of Her Majesty's Government for the relief of the distressed agricultural population of Ireland? The landlords have been forced to recognize the necessity for an almost unprecedented abatement of rent. When this has not taken place ejectments are falling broadcast. The records of our county courts furnish the saddest and the most extreme difficulty; the farmers are able to pay for the bare necessaries of life; and it is at such a moment, and in the face of such a state of things, that the Government proposes that the impoverished tenantry should be heavily taxed to defray the cost of public works. The carrying out of public works in this way would be an aggravation of the misery of the people, and the idea that such a mode of proceeding is contemplated creates universal alarm. The only means of affording relief to the labouring population is by a system of State works. There is scarcely a district where works of this nature might not be undertaken with infinite advantage to the owner, the occupier, and the general public. I shall only refer to useful lines of railway that might be constructed in Kerry. A line might be made from Killoughlin to join the Great Southern and Western at Farranfore; another from Headfort to Kenmare; and a third from Tralee to the sea, a distance of about six miles. Two of these lines would open up great districts, and the third would make a good port of Tralee. Government works, and Government works only, can, under the circumstances, supply relief to the unemployed in Ireland; and I think we are entitled to call upon the Government, who have such vast resources at their command, not to allow the people to starve when good wages can be so usefully earned. The case against the Government may, to use a familiar expression, be presented to the House in a nutshell. The Government purposes to lend to the landlords for improvements; this must render absolutely worthless the principal provisions of the Land Act of 1870, and seriously weaken the occupiers' hold upon the soil. The Government has admitted the prevailing agricultural distress, and attributed it to bad harvests. But, whatever may be the cause, all Irish farmers are engaged in a desperate struggle to hold their position. Almost countless ejectments have been served for non-payment of rent, which the farmers find it impossible to pay, and, in addition to their present liabilities, the Government now proposes that the farmers should be made liable to further charges in order to meet the expenses of public works. Comment upon such proceedings is unnecessary; but one cannot help recalling with amazement the imputation cast upon Irish Members last night by one of the most able of statesmen. But for the well-known impossibility of such an occurrence, one might almost suspect that a joke was intended. I trust the House will not commit the fatal mistake of sanctioning the proposals of the Government, and that some adequate means of meeting the distress in Ireland, such as Government works, may be provided.

COLONEL COLTHURST wished to call the attention of the House to the state of two parishes in the extreme south-west of the county of Cork, which he had visited within the last few days. He referred to East and West Skull as an example only, for there was a large portion of the parishes on the extreme south-west sea coast of Cork in the same condition. He found in these two parishes not less than 300 families on the verge of starvation—having no food, no money, and no credit. They had been living on one meal a-day, and that of Indian meal. Holding a small portion of land, they were disqualified from receiving out-door relief under the Poor Law. The workhouse was built to hold 1,000, and there were now only 150 inmates. To go into the workhouse would be ruin; they must leave their land, their cabins, and be at the mercy of their creditors. So far as the Poor Law was concerned, they were absolutely without relief. What had been done in the shape of loans to owners? There were 68 owners in the two parishes of Skull Union, not more than three or four of whom had applied for loans; and it would take five or six weeks from the date of an application to the Board of Works before any authority could be sent down authorizing an advance. These people would gladly pay 3½ per cent for loans to be expended in work on their own land, especially as repayment was deferred for two years. That would be salvation to the distressed districts. The Boards of Guardians had ignored distress. Supposing these small occupiers, who were little more than labourers, to be in Lancashire, such as had families would receive an allowance, and work would most rightly be exacted from them. In case of sickness the head of the family would be entitled to out-door relief; but in Ireland three or four might be lying ill of fever, yet there was no power to give out-door relief. This state of things necessarily threw an amount of odium on the law and government of England. The labouring poor in Ireland should have the same right to relief—no more and no less—as the same class in England, and work should be exacted from the able-bodied. With regard to the proposed method of re-payment, only a portion—say, 5*s.* in the pound—should be thrown on the local rates; and where the charge exceeded 5*s.* in the pound, there should be a rate in aid either from the Church Surplus or from Imperial sources. Instead of intrusting the work to baronial sessions, which were cumbrous in their mode of proceeding, it should be put into the hands of the Boards of Guardians, which, having dispensary districts under them, were thoroughly acquainted with the whole state of the Unions.

MR. A. MOORE warmly endorsed the remarks of the hon. Member who had just addressed the House. The Irish Members were placed in a very painful position, for, to use a common expression, "the hat had been sent round," and, owing to the action of the Government, the people were placed in the situation of beggars. They were citizens of the richest Empire in the world, and they were told to seek alms of the general community. The Government had, he thought, been guilty of great neglect. There was no generous man who could fail to appreciate the labours of the wife of the Lord Lieutenant, and Irishmen were greatly indebted to her; but the Government had placed her Grace in an unhappy position. What Irishmen wanted was not alms, but work. They wished to have money advanced to individuals or public bodies, and, wherever it could be done on good security, to carry on reproductive works. It should be remembered that Ireland was an integral portion of the United Kingdom. It contributed £7,000,000 annually to the Expenditure of the United Kingdom; of that sum, £4,000,000 was spent in Ireland and the rest went into the Imperial Exchequer. He thought Ireland had just as good a claim on the public rates as the Colonists at the Cape, on whose behalf a most expensive war had been conducted, and who, instead of giving assistance themselves, plundered the commissariat, and refused, except at exorbitant prices, the little luxuries necessary for the unfortunate soldiers. He wished to bear his testimony to the willingness of the Irish people to work. He had seen men coming three miles in the morning and going back as many miles in the evening to earn 10*d.* by digging an Irish perch 24 feet long and 4 feet deep. The loans which the Government proposed to grant were surrounded by a system of red tape; and the hon. and gallant Member for Sligo (Colonel King-Harman) had told them that before he received a shilling from the Board of Works he was compelled to prove his title ten times over. But it was not only the red tape that was open to objection, but the direction in which the money was to be given. At present no tenant farmer who had not an unexpired lease of 40 years could receive a grant. On this point it was most important that some concession should be made, and that loans should be given to men with shorter leases, or, perhaps, with no leases at all, but who had a valuable tenant right, for tenant right was acknowledged to a large extent outside Ulster. Before the close of the debate he would like to have some information as to the steps the Government intended to take to prevent the recurrence in future of such calamities as that now under consideration. They had heard a great deal about the resistance to the law in the West of Ireland; and that had been given as a reason, in many quarters, for not contributing to relieve the distress. But was it not a fact that Connemara was one of the parts of Ireland where the soil was poorest and the rents were highest in proportion to the value of the land? In many parts the rent of those unfortunate people who were now driven to desperation was four times the Government valuation, and more, and the land was absolutely deteriorating. If both these circumstances were true, some strong measures must be taken on the Land Question. They must be prepared to lay the axe to the root to prevent the recurrence of such a state of things. The present Land Laws were intolerable. The landlord would not improve the land because he was not sure of the interest of his money, and the tenant would not do it because he had no security. Then what was to be done? This state of things called imperatively for a change in the Land Laws. They could not induce either one class or the other to do its duty by the land until they had altered the law. He, and those with him, offered as their remedy fixity of tenure, in order to induce the tenant to improve the land. Too many of the landlords were, unhappily, absentees, and took no interest in the land except to obtain their rents. He knew that it was very hard to induce Englishmen to look at the Land Laws fairly; they said that the system had worked well in England, and asked why there should be a different system in Ireland. But there was no parity whatever in the condition of the two countries. One important distinction was that the one country suffered from absenteeism while the other did not. The absentee landlord lived in London or on the Continent; he claimed all the rights and performed none of the duties of property. But the great distinction, and also the keystone of the Land Question of Ireland, was the question of improvements. The English landlord let a farm with the fences, the roads, the dwelling, and the out-offices all in good order. In Ireland the whole of these things, everything existing above the level of the soil, was the property of the tenant. Would anyone say that the Irishman, who expended his labour and capital in making roads and fences, and in other ways, was in the same position as the Englishman, who had simply to take a farm ready at once for occupation? These two great principles constituted an essential difference between the two countries; and therefore it was impossible to argue that, because the land system of England worked well, the same system must also work well in Ireland. He did not know in what way the Government would propose to provide against the recurrence of calamities in Ireland; he hoped that it might be in the direction of fixity of tenure, in which direction it was competent to the Government to make a move with safety to themselves and satisfaction to the country. They had heard a great deal about peasant proprietors, and on the previous night an able speech was made against the system. While feeling gratified at the ability with which the hon. Member acquitted himself, he regretted that the ability had not been employed in a better cause. The scheme of a peasant proprietary was recommended by a Committee of the House's own appointment, and evidence was given that it was desirable there should be a substantial increase in the number of the owners of the land. One Member who gave evidence—a late Member of the House—summed up the whole case in saying that a peasant proprietary was a special constable sworn in for the defence of law and order. He might also refer to a Resolution of the House passed last Session on the Motion of the hon. Member for Reading (Mr. Shaw Lefevre), approving generally of an increase in the number of owners of land in Ireland. This was no new-fangled scheme. It had been tried in many countries, and wherever it had been tried it had been attended with great success. It had made Belgium prosperous, and France a land of fruit and flowers. If the present distress continued, the value of land would fall lower and lower; and he hoped that, whatever sales might be made in the Encumbered Estates Court, the estates of absentee landlords, who, he thought, merely cumbered the ground, would be among the first to be sold. The voice of the whole country called for a change. All the remedies proposed might not be approved by the House; but the remedy of a peasant proprietary was a sure one, and there was now exceptionally favourable opportunity of adopting it. Under these circumstances, he trusted that a deaf ear would not be turned to the prayer.

DR. WARD regretted that the Land Question had been brought so much into this debate, as they were not there to discuss that subject, but to consider the question of relief to Ireland. They had brought a grave charge against the Government, that the people of Ireland had been for some time in a distressed and almost starving condition, and that the Government had not done its duty. They had now had the answer of the Government, and after that he could not help feeling alarm for the immediate future of the people of Ireland. The people were actually starving in many places, and what had the Government done? It had done something public in the way of granting loans, and something private in enabling Poor Law Boards to give out-door relief. This had been done for months, and yet the people had been starving. The Government was not going to do more than it had done, and the people would starve. What had been done by the Government so far had not saved the people from great distress. The Government had not saved a single life, for it was the relief funds which had saved life, not the Government. The Government had proved itself most incompetent, and such a confession of incompetency was a most alarming thing for the country. The Government had had secret intentions with regard to the Unions; but the Unions did not know these secret intentions, and therefore did not grant outdoor relief. How had the loans to landlords acted? In the very poorest districts the landlords could not get their rents, and they were unwilling or unable to encumber their estates further, and thus in the very districts in which the money was most wanted the loans were not obtained. The Prelates had stated that in the poorest districts loans were not availed of. Therefore, one of the principal means of the Government had been a complete failure. The Government was not going to do a single thing in the future which it had not done in the past. The charge, then, that they brought against the Government was that the people would have starved but for the public subscriptions that had been made, and that the Government had not rightly gauged either the extent of the distress in the past or its probable increase in the future. If the Government continued in its present measures only until the next harvest, it would be guilty of the terrible crime of allowing the people to starve, for public subscriptions could not keep them alive five or six months. It was not a time for public subscriptions now, but for Government action. The whole system of the Government had been a complete failure, and if the Government were not prepared to do more than it had done at present, it would launch the country into almost as terrible a famine as that of 1846.

Major O'BEIRNE said, he represented one of the distressed districts in the country, and was sorry to confirm the statement of the last speaker, that the landlords would not avail themselves of the facilities offered by the Government to obtain money under the new regulations, for the very obvious reason that they were too impoverished by not having received their rents to do so. The case was very urgent, for the people were already on the brink of starvation, and in another fortnight matters would be still worse. He had received letters from the various relief committees in his district, which stated that if it was not for the monies received from the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund and the Mansion House Fund many persons must have been in a hopeless state. It was quite true, as had been stated, that the Government had done nothing to keep the people from starvation, and he thought the Government ought to do something now. He thoroughly agreed with the hon. Member for Tralee (the O'Donoghue) in the suggestion that State works should be started in the country. One most valuable work, and one which would benefit several adjoining counties, would be to deepen the bed of the River Shannon, and remove the obstructions, such as weirs, &c., in the river. By that means thousands and thousands of acres of land might be prevented from being flooded, and would be greatly increased in value. He appealed to the Government to undertake them at once, and, by so doing, to show their sense of the gravity of the situation.

Mr. FAY urged the Government, instead of pauperizing the distressed peasantry of Ireland through the medium of the Poor Law, to transport them from their wretched hovels to the waste lands which, unfortunately, still abounded. By that means not only would the poor people be benefited, but acres upon acres of valuable land would be brought within the area of cultivation. The landlords owning these lands should be called upon by notice to accept or refuse an offer of loans for the purpose of being expended upon them. If they refused, the Government might then compulsorily purchase them at a fair price. He did not see why men should be allowed to retain lands in a barren state for an unlimited period which were capable of reclamation.

Mr. P. MARTIN said, the suggestions which had been made by the hon. Member for Cavan with reference to the reclamation of waste land were of a practical character, and deserved the consideration of the Government; but that question might, he thought, be more fittingly discussed when the Bill that was promised had been introduced for giving effect to the projects agitated with regard to the reclamation of waste lands in Ireland. He wished to say a few words to the Government with respect to matters to which their attention had not been sufficiently directed. He had the honour of representing a county which the Chief Secretary had stated was not suffering from exceptional depression; but though the hand of Providence had not weighed so heavily upon Kilkenny as it had upon so many other counties in Ireland, yet he regretted to say that deep and widespread distress existed through that county. It was perfectly true that the farmers and labouring classes throughout Kilkenny had been quiet and uncomplaining. They had not proclaimed to the world at large their suffering, nor with vociferous clamours called out for Government aid. Nevertheless, the distress in the county of Kilkenny was extreme. The labourers in the towns throughout that county were, though willing to work, unable to find employment. The small farmers were deeply in debt; and, for the most part, without seed or money. The recent Returns made to this House established these facts — showed the enormous money loss sustained in Ireland by failure of crops and the general falling away in the amount of those funds which represented the savings of the people. What alone had been the magnitude and extent of the loss in consequence of the extraordinary failure which had taken place in the potato crop during the last four years? Only yesterday there appeared in *The Freeman's Journal*, from the pen of a gentleman who took a leading part in days gone by, in the famine years, in relieving distress, and who was a very accurate statistician. Taking the figures from the Registrar General's Reports, Mr. Pim, in that letter, showed that in 1874, 1875, and 1876, the produce of potatoes in Ireland amounted to 511,219,000 tons; but from 1877 to 1879, the entire produce, unfortunately, had only been 5,397,455 tons, showing a deficiency in those three years from that one crop of 5,821,819 tons. He asked hon. Gentlemen to reflect on what this meant to Ireland. Taking the average value of the potato crop at 60*s.* a-ton, which was a very low average indeed, it amounted to a loss to Ireland of over £17,000,000. The tenant valuation of land used for agricultural purposes was, he believed, only £10,000,000. The falling-off in bank deposits and notes, taken together in the last Return of Irish savings, showed a decrease of about £5,250,000 in the past three years of the present crisis. Could anyone deny, then, that the amount of distress and suffering was wider, extended, and general in its effects? It was not confined to the Western and seaboard districts. The Government ought not to limit their provident cares, or to stimulate and encourage the cropping of land, and the carrying out of works, to those districts alone. It was their duty to direct their attention to the entire of Ireland. There was no class upon whom this failure of the crops, accompanied by the low price of cattle, had weighed so heavily as on the small farmers; and he ventured to say that any such plan as had been suggested by the Government of making loans to landlords would not meet distress of the character now existing in Ireland. In places which were not classed as "distressed," landlords wanting to borrow money would have to incur legal expenses, besides having to pay a high rate of interest; and such burdens they could not reasonably be expected to take upon themselves. The State had guaranteed railways in Canada, and Indian railways were assisted by the Government; it was surely, therefore, not unreasonable to expect that in a crisis like the present aid of a similar kind should be afforded to Ireland? He supported the Amendment of his hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw), because he was strongly of opinion that the Government had been neglectful of their duty in dealing with that crisis. They were forewarned of its occurrence by the representations of the Roman Catholic clergy, and by a Memorial from Irish Members of every shade of politics. There was, therefore, no excuse for their not having taken more timely steps to relieve the distress which prevailed. His main reason, however, for condemning their conduct was that the measures which they now proposed with that object were insufficient to meet the necessities of the case. If they meant to deal fairly and justly towards Ireland, they must make up their minds to this—that it was not in these districts alone which the Government had been pleased to schedule as "distressed," but throughout the length of Ireland, some stimulus and encouragement must be given to productive works, and something must be done to provide seed depôts, so as to give the small farmers in these pressing times of sharp need some assistance.

MR. JUSTIN M'CARTHY agreed with the hon. Member who had last spoken in expressing great regret that some more statesmanlike and comprehensive measure had not been offered by the Government. He agreed that this measure was not satisfactory even as a means of meeting the present distress. But he regretted still more that it seemed to carry with it no prospective advantage, and that when the Famine had done its work it would be remembered simply as one of the casual incidents in the condition of things—nothing would have been done to prevent the recurrence of calamities like that they were now suffering from. It seemed to him that during the present crisis there had been a disinclination to give any help until the people had sunk into the most extreme poverty. The Government, by the course they had adopted, had encouraged an idea that nothing could be gained in Ireland without sufficient clamour and agitation. In the county of Longford, which he had the honour to represent, the impression of the most influential men was that the time was not opportune for great agitation, that the object of everyone should be to tide over the present season of trial, and leave to a future occasion the questions of land tenure and the government of the country. Therefore, the leading men of the county abstained from holding public meetings, and the result had been that Longford had not yet been placed in the Schedule which entitled the landlords to exceptional facilities for the borrowing of money. The distress in Longford, however, was deep and intense. There was, he regretted to find, no indication given even yet by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the Government intended to propose any measures which would adequately meet the great and growing difficulty. The Government were apparently satisfied with proposing that for the present a system of out-door relief should be provided. Yet they could not but have been aware that great distress was impending over Ireland, for their attention had been called to the matter last Session by the hon. Member for Dungarvan, by himself, and by others; but, unfortunately, they were too much occupied in making widows and orphans in Zululand and elsewhere to turn their attention to the possibility of preventing famine from making widows and orphans in Ireland. Even when it was admitted on all hands that great and widespread distress existed in Ireland, an explosion of temper was witnessed on the part of the Viceroy which could not but have had the opposite of a beneficial operation on the minds of the suffering people. A banquet was to be given in Dublin by the then recently-elected Lord Mayor, to which the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland was invited. The Lord Mayor had presided over a meeting of Irish Members of Parliament, not as Lord Mayor, but as a Member of the House of Commons, at which meeting a resolution, the language of which was considered strong, was proposed. The Lord Mayor, as Chairman, did his best to have the language of the resolution altered; but, notwithstanding that fact, the Viceroy declined to attend the Lord Mayor's banquet. Could they understand such an absurd assertion of dignity at a time when the question in the hearts of the Irish people was whether a famine was or was not to spread over the land? Could they not imagine the impression which was likely to be produced on the minds of the Irish people by such a proceeding? He was afraid that the Representative of Royalty on that occasion did as little as other Members of Her Majesty's Government had done to induce the people of Ireland to believe that there was a real, sincere determination on their part to promote the prosperity of the country. They were all, doubtless, aware that many meetings were held in Ireland during the autumn, and at some of them there were some rather hasty expressions of discontent used, not, perhaps, wholly unnatural in the circumstances, but certainly going beyond what any reasonable Irishman could desire to hear on occasions like those to which he referred, or on any other occasion. He was, however, of opinion that they might well have been looked over, considering the not unnatural excitement and heat which prevailed, and not have been magnified into importance by being made the subject of a State prosecution. But Her Majesty's Government had really manifested their only evidence of vigilance by these ridiculous prosecutions for a few foolish words uttered at those meetings. With respect to the proposals of the Government, he did not think that any enduring benefit would be gained by Ireland from them, unless they were followed up by some wise and statesmanlike dealing with the whole system of land tenure in Ireland. The discontent which existed in Ireland was not, in his opinion, merely a sentimental wish for some imaginary better state of things, but was the genuine outcome of actual suffering. It was surely time that some real effort should be made to improve the condition of the people of Ireland. For his part, he did not know whether that effort could not be more successfully made by a Conservative than by a Liberal Government, and that he said, though he was himself a Member of the Liberal Party. The Party opposite were a united Party, and always voted loyally together, while on that side a variety of opinions naturally prevailed. The time was opportune, and he trusted that the Government would re-consider their proposals, and bring in some measure adequate to the occasion, and which would confer a great and lasting benefit upon Ireland. He had had some hope that even now Her Majesty's Ministers would rise to the situation and propose a measure which would put an end to the existing state of distress in Ireland, and would also deal in a satisfactory manner with the educational difficulty existing in the country. This had not been done, and the loss of such an opportunity would probably one day be a source of universal regret.

MR. MELDON said, he rose to support the Amendment, in which he most cordially concurred. He thought the occasion of bringing forward that Amendment was most opportune. They could not shut their eyes to the fact that almost the sole occasion when the Representatives of the people could approach the Sovereign was an occasion of this kind. It was then that they could lay at the feet of Her Majesty the wishes and feelings of her distressed subjects in Ireland, and he did not think it would be regarded as an ungracious thing by the Queen. On the contrary, he believed it would be grateful to Her Majesty were the Amendment which they proposed to the Address to be accepted by the House. The personal loyalty which existed in Ireland towards Her Majesty and the Members of Her Family was, without doubt, due in a very great degree to Her Majesty's kind heart and tenderness, which she had always shown personally to her subjects in Ireland. her visits to that country had always been, he was sure, matters of pleasant recollection to her, and certainly none of the Royal Family ever appeared in Ireland without bringing back with them reminiscences of attachment to the Throne. In these circumstances, he regarded the present as an opportune opportunity for approaching the Queen with the Amendment which they desired to carry. What were the principal points raised by that Amendment? They complained of the action of the Government—first, in having allowed so much time to elapse; second, in not even at the present moment bringing forward proper measures for the relief of distress in Ireland; and third, in not having struck, or been prepared to strike, a blow at the root of the frequently recurring famines which afflicted that country, as a result of its present system of land tenure. The charge against the Government was not one of mere negligence, by reason of which mischief might occur. They charged the Government with having permitted actual starvation to have occurred in Ireland. Documents brought forward by Her Majesty's Ministers themselves distinctly showed they were fully aware so far back as August last that if adequate steps were not taken famine must necessarily ensue. It was, no doubt, true that up to the present time no deaths from pure and simple starvation had actually taken place; but he thought the Members of the Government had made themselves responsible all the same for the loss of thousands of lives amongst the Irish people. Starvation was not a thing which came on suddenly; it was not a disease which struck a person down like fever. Starvation might go on day after day and month after month. People were suffering from a great want of food and fuel. Their constitutions were attacked and weakened, and there could be no doubt whatever that, in consequence of this, the germs of disease had been engendered very largely throughout many districts of Ireland. Those for whom he spoke complained that Her the present time, for that to be the case, everything would have to be undertaken with extraordinary rapidity and at high pressure. In the West of Ireland seed time extended from the 5th of March to the 17th, and if the people were employed after the 10th of March on the proposed works a great deal of harm would be done. He would have liked to see the Government begin the projected works on the 15th of January, so as to allow the people to earn some money; and then, at the proper time, they would have been ready to begin sowing the seed. Let them have out-door relief while they were sowing the seed, and then next year they would have a fair chance of obtaining a good harvest. Now all the schemes of the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be working against time; and, as far as he could see, time would win, if considerable pressure was not used. Out-door relief would be a very good measure, and, indeed, was an absolute necessity; but it was a very poor substitute for something better. There should have been one or two large public works undertaken by each of the large local bodies, simply for the purpose of employing labour. That would have been a good thing, and would have been attended with the advantage of keeping up the standard of labour. If the Government had looked round and relaxed the regulations, they would have found works which could have been undertaken with mutual advantage. So far as he knew, what was most wanted in Ireland was the completion of the railway systems; and if the Chancellor of the Exchequer could see his way to make six or eight branches in different parts of the country, the money being guaranteed at 2 or 3 per cent, and a certain amount of work given, he thought there would be the enormous advantage that there would be *bonâ fide* honest works going on, and they would save the demoralization which any scheme of merely giving labour for labour's sake, with the view of saving people's lives from starvation, would have. He felt sure that if they did not take great pains with regard to the harvest next year they would have a famine. The seed had been sown in nearly the same land in Ireland for some 20 or 30 years, and had thus been rendered peculiarly liable to disease, and to change the seed belonging to the people would be to do a great and permanent benefit. The good effects of changing the seed would last for 15 or 20 years; and he thought the Government ought to take some special means of changing the seed, and thus enabling them to improve their crops in the future. He was afraid that unless some special exertions of that kind were made many of the people would be absolutely without seed at all; and he would suggest that it would be a good and useful work for the Government to advance money to Poor Law Unions to be expended in that manner. He trusted the Government would indicate that they would take that suggestion into consideration. The Government had a noble opportunity before them; and if they took prompt and energetic action, they might still save the Irish people from much further suffering and distress.

MR. CHARLES LEWIS desired to call the attention of the House to the form of the Amendment that had been proposed. It was, in the first place, practically a Vote of Censure on the Government for their delays and misconduct in the past; in the second place, they were asked to pledge themselves as to measures for alleviating the distress in the present and the future; and, thirdly, they were asked to commit themselves to certain vague and undefined measures with reference to the tenure of land which were only hinted at in a confused form in the concluding sentence. The first portion, he thought, was unreasonable and untrue; the second was unnecessary; and the third was illusory and delusive. He had listened to the speeches of hon. Members opposite, hoping to extract from them the specific grounds of complaint against the course of the Government. One allegation was continually urged—namely, that the Government had not done enough; but whatever the Government had done or proposed to do was objected to by the Home Rule Members, who, even among themselves, were not agreed as to what course should be adopted. One had advocated a general system of out-door relief; another had objected to this; one had proposed loans to the landlords, another to the tenants. One hon. Gentleman had actually risen in his place and complained of the outflow of private charity in this great distress. They had had a signal proof on the present occasion from the mouths of Irishmen themselves—Irishmen of a certain type, be it remembered—that it was hopeless to attempt to satisfy them by any reasonable or statesmanlike measures. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw), the ostensible Leader of the Party, had expressed with fulness their views; but the only tangible fact he gathered from his remarks was that if the Government did so and so, without specifying what, he would undertake to pacify any fractious meeting in Ireland. It had been said that this Irish Question was treated by various English Governments with a view to Party interests and General Elections; but he could affirm that among the Home Rulers themselves there was a great deal of looking to the future, not with reference to the distressed people of Ireland, but as distressed candidates in Ireland. Everyone was pained beyond measure at the widespread distress in that part of Her Majesty's Dominions; but that side of the House could claim that they had shown the same active sympathy which had been so much the vaunt of those on the opposite side. The conduct of the young Nobleman who had recently tried to stem the tide of famine and sorrow in Ireland in this respect contrasted favourably with the language which they heard from the other side of the Atlantic, and which if uttered in this country would amount to sedition and treason. He thought that the language of his hon. Friend the Member for Cork, in which he sneered at the prosperity of Ulster, and compared Belfast with Halifax, was hardly worthy of him. If Irish Members were so enthusiastic for the commercial prosperity of their country as they professed to be, surely they ought to have congratulated his hon. Friend (Mr. Corry) that Ulster contained a town of such present and probable future greater importance. The hon. Member for Cork wanted to pass off as a joke his allusion to the taking of the lynch-pin out of a process-server's car; but this was a grim joke, at a time when process-servers were being beaten and otherwise maltreated, and delivered at a solemn conclave assembled, presumably, on a most serious occasion. How would the gallant peasantry of the West construe the allusion otherwise than as meaning that a little violence would have the sanction of the Home Rule Party? He congratulated the hon. Member for Tralee (the O'Donoghue) on the metamorphosis he had recently undergone. Formerly his voice used to be heard from behind the front Opposition Bench, between which and the Bench on the opposite side a great gulf intervened. Thence he formerly fulminated anathemas against his present Friends. Now, like every neophyte, he championed with enthusiasm his most recent creed—that of the new Party led by the hon. Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell). But whatever the Government did met with the disapproval of Gentlemen opposite. If they promoted public works it was said that they were benefiting the landlords at the expense of the tenants. They were accused of trying to impede the operation of the Land Act of 1870. But when they saw the list of works of public utility which the Government proposed to carry out—such as roads and bridges, which were certainly not more for the benefit of one class than another—there could be no force in such charges as had been brought against them. If they were going to judge whether the Government had been guilty of grievous neglect and delay they would require a series of well-authenticated facts, and not be content without one, before throwing on the Government the cruel stigma of having, while hundreds, it was said thousands, of Irishmen were approaching the condition of dying, shut their hearts against the demand for sympathy and allowed their fellow-countrymen to be treated in a disgraceful way. He challenged hon. Gentlemen opposite to produce a single instance of the Government having wilfully overlooked or neglected their duty in any parish or district in Ireland. There were evils connected with the question of distress in Ireland which made the contemplation of any effectual remedy almost hopeless. In some parts there was the difficulty caused by the barren, uninviting soil. Again, let them go into many places in the West and notice the small parcels of land from which the four, five, or six members of a family were miserably trying to extract an existence. The system of division which rendered this possible was, in his opinion, an evil of no inconsiderable magnitude. When they should come to hear—as he had no doubt they would in the course of the Session—long-winded suggestions about peasant proprietorship, they should remember that its advantages, if linked with incapacity or want of capital, might prove no unmixed boon. The next difficulty to which he wished to refer was the absence of a middle class in many districts of Ireland, and the consequent want of that interlacing of society by the mixture of one class with another which prevailed in England and Scotland. What, he asked, constituted the great aggravation of Irish distress? Why, the wicked agitation against the obligations of law and morals which had been going on for months under a leadership which he would not describe. When dealing with this subject among his own constituents he asked them how, if the agitation should be successful, they were to get their debts paid?—for the spirit of repudiation was like fever or leprosy, and spread from one part of the body politic to another, and would not be restricted to those who held the position of tenants. It was bad enough to have persons who were not in a responsible position going about the country talking to men on whom misery had set her heavy hand and suggesting to them that they should add to their personal degradation the moral degradation of being revolutionists; but it was worse still that observations and speeches should be made and letters written by men who were in a high and responsible position. He regretted that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich (Mr. Gladstone) was absent from his place. He had endeavoured to extract from the recent speeches of the right hon. Gentleman their gist and marrow; and he would point out to the House the three great points which were made in one of the Midlothian speeches. The first was to this effect—"It is right, as a public principle, to contend that the State can expropriate property; it is a mere question of the application of that right and that liberty." That sentence was immediately quoted by the hon. Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell), now in America, as evidence that the right hon. Member (Mr. Gladstone) was in favour of his land propositions. Proposition No. 2 was—"The further you are from the Metropolis the greater number of Members your country is entitled to have." That grand, new, spick and span, statesmanlike, constitutional doctrine was enumerated, inaugurated, and shot off by the right hon. Gentleman to satisfy the Midlothian electors. Irish Members might well contend that if that was the principle initiated by an ex-Prime Minister—the chosen, though not the titular Leader of the Liberal Party—the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich was a better Home Ruler than they were. The third proposition of the right hon. Gentleman, in the language of many Home Rule applicants, was that "it would be a very great advantage to relieve the Houses of Parliament of much of their business connected with particular portions of the United Kingdom." [*Cheers from the Irish Members.*] Why, that was the very formula of Home Rule; and when they found a responsible statesman going down to ingratiate himself with his last new love by such propositions, they were threatened, in his opinion, with a calamity even greater than the agitation of the hon. Member for Meath. The Conservatives had been twitted with having for a cry "Disraeli, Corry, and no dismemberment of the Empire." Well, he did not call that a bad cry to go to the country with. In fact, the evidence of that day showed it to be a very good cry. He warned his Friends opposite that it might prove a better cry than that of "Cavendish and dismemberment of the Empire." Possibly in the course of the Session the House would be able to abstract from the noble Lord (the Marquess of Hartington) the exact propositions which he desired English and Scotch people to understand he took up on the subject of Home Rule. So far as he was able to read between the lines of the letter recently published by the noble Marquess, his proposal seemed to amount to this—"Do as you like, promise what you like, no matter what, provided you get in and turn a Tory out. All you have to do is to hold up with one hand the Union Jack, and with the other the torn Constitution of the country. You may ride in on those two horses." The probability was that if they did ride on those two horses Liberal Members would break their backs in the operation. There were hundreds and thousands of men in the city he represented (Londonderry) who abhorred and opposed, with as much vehemence as any Member of the House, the idea of separating themselves from England. The warning of to-day's proceedings showed that the opposition, whatever might be its temporary success, and however much the Ministry might be affected by the existence of national distress, could dare to tamper with the unity of the Empire.

MR. O'CONNOR POWER said, he was not going to follow the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis) through all his exciting comments. The speech they had just heard would convince them that the hon. Member was, if not an impressive, at least an excited, or perhaps he might say a flying-trapeze orator, for, from the manner in which he moved about, he at one moment addressed the right hon. Gentleman in the Chair, whilst at the next, it seemed as if he was about to finish by addressing the Sergeant-at-Arms. The hon. Gentleman had at least lifted the House beyond the issue before it; but, as far as he could, he (Mr. O'Connor Power) should deal with the points raised and bearing on the subject before the House. Reference had been made to the difference in the ranks of the Home Rulers; but it must be remembered that they were at least united in this Resolution, which declared that the Government had been culpably negligent in dealing with the threatened and actual distress in Ireland. It was said an hon. Member had objected to the flow of charity to Ireland; but why did not the hon. Member for Londonderry accept the views on this subject expressed by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw), and not hold up the words of some not very prominent Member of the Home Rule Party? Was that the hon. Member's idea of fair play —to bring forward a fragment of evidence on one side and suppress all the evidence on the other side? That kind of petty advocacy might be indulged in at a petty sessions court, but it was contemptible before a Legislative Assembly. As to the recent accession of the hon. Member for Tralee (the O'Donoghue), whom the hon. Member had taunted with inconsistency, that hon. Gentleman had recognized a great crisis in the history of his country. He also recognized the many years he had devoted to the moderate and constitutional exposition of Irish grievances in that House, and what was the result of all his efforts and his experience? Why, this—that the hon. Member for Tralee came to declare that the sense of justice was so small in the average House of Commons that he told the Irish people they must rely on the moral power and justice of their own cause, and on a constitutional agitation of their grievances, to exert sufficient pressure to induce the House to pass measures of justice to Ireland. He (Mr. O'Connor Power) would ask what was the history of the Leader of the Conservative Party? Had not the present Imperial Prime Minister changed from side to side until he ultimately arrived at what he believed was a truly patriotic policy, and did not the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich (Mr. Gladstone), who was the hope of the soundest elements in the Liberal Party, once belong to the Tory Party? Did the hon. Member object to the support which the Tory Party received from the Tory Home Rule Members for Wexford and Sligo because they had joined the Home Rule Party? Regarding the boast of the hon. Member as to the result of the Liverpool election, he thought that to call the return of the Conservative candidate by a majority of 2,000 a victory in that Tory city was to show that the Conservatives were thankful for small mercies. It seemed to be quite a different thing from the point of view of the hon. Member for a Liberal candidate to adopt Home Rule in his programme in Liverpool and a Tory candidate to do the same thing in Manchester. According to that view, what was a crime and blasphemy in the one case was only a correct thing to do in the other. As to the practical measures which the hon. Member said the Government had taken with regard to Irish distress, he (Mr. O'Connor Power) maintained that up to the present moment the Government had not taken a single practical step to work those measures out. All that the Government had done up to this moment was to state in one of the official letters that if an emergency threatened famine in Ireland, then the Government would consider the desirability of appointing three Inspectors under the Local Government Board at a salary of £500 a-year! He agreed with the hon. Member that Ireland suffered from the want of a middle class. There were two classes in Ireland. One — 10,000 or 12,000—was excessively rich, and the other—the millions of the Irish people —was excessively poor. Surely the hon. Member might have given them a little information as to the causes which brought this state of affairs about. It was brought about by confiscation, by brute force, by the power of the sword, and those other means of torture which the English Government had employed —powers which had been used by England, and which had brought about results which the hon. Member affected to deplore. The House had been treated to a warm denunciation of the land agitation. The hon. Gentleman had re-echoed the statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty, and said that Ireland was full of agitators, airing imaginary grievances. He would appeal to the House, when had one measure of freedom in Ireland—social, political, industrial, or religious—been granted that was not the result of either revolution or agitation? People made political capital out of the declarations of the right hon. Member for Greenwich; but the Party opposite ought to recollect that a former Leader of theirs, the Duke of Wellington, declared in the House of Lords that England had to consider between the granting of Roman Catholic Emancipation and civil war; and it was only when this Ministerial declaration was made in the House of Lords that the bigoted prejudices of Great Britain gave way, and the measure was allowed to pass. If there was an element of force and violence in the land agitation, he maintained that the lesson of force had been learnt from the Representatives of English government in Ireland, and from the motives which had actuated English statesmen in legislation of a beneficial character. There was nothing new in the principle stated by the ex-Prime Minister as to the undeniable right of the State to expropriate landed property for some purposes. The principle was inscribed on the Statute Book in the legislation which said that the State might take land when it was necessary for a railway, or for any other purpose of public advantage. If the principle was wrong in the speech it was wrong in our laws. No doubt, the last speaker was to be congratulated on the reported result of the Liverpool election; but when it was considered that there were 60,000 voters, and that the place had always been regarded as a Conservative stronghold, as he (Mr. O'Connor Power) had said, he was not disposed to think the result of the election was much to crow over. The Home Rule element in that election had been referred to; but had not Conservatives themselves condescended to steal a little Home Rule thunder? The noble Lord the Member for Liverpool (Viscount Sandon) had himself used a little Home Rule thunder; for in a speech made recently he declared that he so far sympathized with the Home Rulers and the Irish people that he was prepared to vote for the people of Ireland having equal privileges with the people of England and Scotland. [*Opposition cheers and counter cheers.*] Well, if hon. Members opposite cheered, all he had to do was to turn round and congratulate his Colleagues on the success of their cause. It was evident that the near approach of the General Election was having a salutary effect on the Conservative Party as regarded their attitude upon Irish questions. But he asked those who cheered—and if the noble Lord the Member for Liverpool were in his place he would ask himself—how it was that the votes of the noble Lord were to be found recorded against measures for the equalization of the Parliamentary and borough franchise in Ireland, and against every measure for granting equal privileges to the Irish people, when brought forward by Home Rule Members? It was only when Lord Ramsay had managed to secure the support of the Home Rule Party that the noble Lord the Member for Liverpool found out that he himself had somewhere down in the bottom of his heart a well of sympathy for the Irish people. Much of the warmth of this debate was to be attributed to the manner in which the Address was seconded yesterday. The hon. Member for Belfast (Mr. J. P. Corry), in doing so, said that the great evil of the West of Ireland was over-population. But if there were sufficient resources in the soil for the sustenance of the people, he (Mr. O'Connor Power) declined to accept that view. How was it that fertile land had gone out of cultivation simultaneously with the decline of the population? Where that was so it was idle to talk of over-population, and he maintained that the extermination of the people must be owing to artificial causes, which the hand of Parliament ought to be able to reach. It was unjust to suggest that the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) had sneered at the prosperity of Ulster; there was no one who rejoiced more over it, or who had done more to extend manufacturing industries to the South of Ireland. The Seconder of the Address said that one of the wants of Ireland was manufacturing industry; and that hon. Member, who drank so often to the glorious, pious, and immortal memory of William III., did not seem to be aware that that Monarch had declared in a letter—"I will do all in my power to discourage the woollen manufactures in Ireland;" that he not only discouraged but destroyed that important branch of Irish industry, and so they were presented with the touching spectacle of a loyal follower of the pious, glorious, and immortal William shedding crocodile tears over the ruin of Irish manufactures. [*Loud laughter and cheers.*] In another case, he (Mr. O'Connor Power) might have said that such language was a miracle of hypocrisy; but he would not say so in the case of the hon. Member for Belfast. The hon. Member further asked whether men would invest capital in a country torn by agitation? Of course not, granting the assumed insecurity. But if a man would not invest capital in manufactures without security, why should he invest in the cultivation of the soil without security? Why should four or five hundred thousand farmers be expected to convert the barren places of the whole Island into blooming and fertile fields without security? Give them the custom of the Ulster tenant right—give them the security, social and political, which the people of Ulster had enjoyed for centuries; and the result would be, he would assure them, an industrious and contented population in the West of Ireland. He was proud of the fact that the county Mayo was the source of the land agitation, and he should never deplore it. They found in that part of Ireland the richest lands appropriated by the landlords for themselves, while the tenants were driven half-way up the mountains, until they had made the land valuable, and then they were driven further up. Yet, with these facts staring them in the face, those poor people were accused of a want of industry. On minor questions there was room for difference; but they were agreed that the great evil was that landlords, being the rent-receivers, having the wealth of Ireland in the hollow of their hands, being the custodians of the resources of the nation, did not, with that wealth, possess the necessary enterprize. What was acquired by violence was freely dissipated by profligacy. Nine-tenths of the landed property had been acquired by the sword. Many of the landowners were non-resident, and, as a class, they were so wanting in enterprize that they refused to avail themselves of the facilities afforded to them for developing and improving their property. But what was the use of complaining of the poverty of the Irish soil when the tenants had no security for improvements? The fact was that there was no more fertile soil in Europe. He congratulated the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the improved tone he had shown in this debate—so very different from the manner in which he treated his hon. Friend the Member for Cork last night. But, after all, what did his speech amount to? His hon. and learned Friend the Member for Louth (Mr. Sullivan) correctly described it as a basketful of good intentions. It was the old story. When any mistake was committed by the advocates of Ireland it had generally arisen from placing too much reliance on the statements of the Government. In this instance a great mistake had been made by the Irish Members when they took the proposals of the Government in a serious light, and he maintained that the proposals now put forward were not to be relied upon as means to save the Irish people from starvation, seeing that after six months' inquiry the Government still appeared to doubt if any emergency would arise, although they had the declaration of 70 Irish Members months ago that the emergency had already arisen. If, however, the Government did not do something, it would be the duty of Irish Members to take such a course as would force public attention to the sad condition of their countrymen, and bring about a universal demand that the Government should legislate in an effectual manner by introducing measures of real practical amelioration. It was with a sense of shame and humiliation that they saw their country paraded as a beggar before the nations. There were people who seemed to rejoice in this. Irish bone, and sinew, and intelligence could amass wealth abroad; and the reason why they could not do it at home was that Ireland had been unfortunate in her history and in her laws, especially in those Land Laws which had surrounded the Irish people in the home of their race, and that was the real source of the poverty and degradation in that country; that was the true explanation of the chronic misery of Ireland. They were sometimes asked why they had not introduced practical measures; but had practical measures not been brought forward? Had proposals for the reclamation of waste lands not been brought forward again and again by his hon. Friend the Member for Mallow (Mr. John George MacCarthy)? Not a single practical measure introduced by any Irish Member had received the sanction of the House. Indeed, Ireland was under the rule chiefly of the alien, and the advice of Irishmen in reference to Irish wants was contemptuously rejected. Ireland was not remote even from the House of Commons. Why should it be neglected? But he feared it was remote from the intelligent understanding of the English people as to the real wants of the country. The Lord Mayor of Dublin had to-day presented a Petition from the Corporation of Dublin which was, in fact, an indictment by anticipation of the Government, because the means necessary to prevent the threatened destitution in Ireland were pointed out and forwarded to the responsible authorities in Ireland. It was curious to remark that, in 1847, the Corporation of Dublin was found accusing the Government of the same apathy and indifference as was shown by the Government of the present day; and at that time, as at the present hour, Irish opinion and intelligence was utterly powerless to do anything to help Ireland. The reason for that was that Irish opinion and intelligence had nothing to do with the government of Ireland. The government was in the hands of men alien to the country, men who knew little or nothing of the condition of the people, and who, when a great emergency arose, had to depend on second, third, or fourth-hand information. Reference had been made to the character of the relief works which were instituted during the Famine of 1847; and the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer told them they must be slow in sanctioning schemes of reproductive works, remembering the mistakes that had been made in 1847-8; but the mistakes then made had arisen from the Government not following the advice of the Irish Members and the Corporation of Dublin. Had the Government attended to the representations of such men as Mr. Fagan, or to a Gentleman whose name was still warmly cherished in Ireland, Mr. William Smith O'Brien, who was well qualified to give advice on the subject, the Irish Famine would have been prevented. He saw the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster) in his place, and to him, and those associated with him who took such generous measures to relieve the people of Ireland in the famine time, a lasting debt of gratitude was due, which he (Mr. O'Connor Power) took every opportunity to acknowledge. If anyone took up the reports of the Society of Friends in those days, would he say that the English Government had come out vindicated, or that the Irish landlords had done their duty? No; those authentic documents constituted a strong indictment against the Government and the Irish landlords of that day. He did not mean to say there were not good landlords in Ireland. If all were equally good, there would not be the same need for legislation. But, as a general rule, he maintained that the cultivator ought to be the owner of the soil, and he could be made so in Ireland without robbing any man of a shilling to which he was justly entitled. That was the only remedy for the chronic state of things which existed in Ireland. If a Government having undisputed power failed to improve the condition of a country, the responsibility rested with them. His contention was that the Government of England was responsible for the poverty of Ireland because they had usurped the government of Ireland; for they started with the theory that, whether right or wrong, Irishmen should not be allowed to govern their country. They had undertaken to decide Irish questions, not by the majority of Irish opinion, but by English, Scotch, and Irish opinion mixed, and, legislatively, it was a very bad mixture. It was said, and from a social point of view he agreed with it, that Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen made a very good mixture; but it was very difficult to get them properly mixed. He trusted that this discussion would not close until the House had some more satisfactory declarations from Her Majesty's Government than had been hitherto made. With regard to the peasantry of the West of Ireland, he knew them well; he had seen different classes on both sides of the Atlantic, and he could honestly say that a more industrious people did not exist in any part of the British Empire, or a people more willing to expend their entire labour on the soil from the rising to the setting of the sun. They were confronted now by an agitation which had received considerable attention from the organs of English opinion, and they also found that American opinion was in sympathy with the aspirations of the Irish people. Though that House had declined to listen to the representations of the hon. Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell), the Congress of the United States had placed its Representative Chamber at his disposal for the purpose of enabling him to explain the grievances of his country. Some great men of this country had not hesitated to appeal to American opinion on the condition of Ireland. The man whose proposals had been scoffed at in that House, and who had himself been denounced as a Communist, had been received in Congress with great distinction as a Representative of the Irish people. He trusted it would not be necessary for Irish Representatives to engage in a similar mission to other countries. But he must say that the strongest feeling he had in the present crisis in Ireland was one of shame and humiliation that his country—one of the fairest and most fertile in Europe—should be subject to the evils that now afflicted it; and he trusted that there were many young men who might look forward to a political life during the next 25 years, which, if they were true men, they would dedicate to every just and legitimate effort to remove the chronic poverty by which Ireland was afflicted, labouring earnestly for the time when the reign of peace, freedom, and prosperity would dawn upon that unfortunate but still unconquered land.

MR. PLUNKET said, he was certain that, in common with himself, every hon. Member of that House, whether Englishman, Scotchman, or Irishman, would heartily sympathize with the eloquent peroration of the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down (Mr. O'Connor Power), and sigh for the time when peace, prosperity, and contentment would be established in Ireland. But it struck him (Mr. Plunket) that there was an odd and remarkable contrast to that aspiration, when the hon. Gentleman spoke with such enthusiasm of the achievements of the hon. Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell), and the representative character he assumed in America. If they were to judge by recent accounts from that country, the reception of that hon. Member was now assuming a less cordial character. He would not follow the hon. Member through his speech; but he must say he could not find—although it had touched upon a great many topics more or less connected with the Ireland of the past and the future—that any remedy had been suggested or practical observations made to meet the distress of the present. The hon. Member had challenged the Government to defend their policy; but had he indicated any one point on which they ought to have done and had not done their utmost to avert and relieve the distress? Some part of that distress he had attributed to the absence of English capital from Ireland and its non-application to the reclamation of waste land; and, if he understood him rightly, he had suggested that greater security should be given for the investment of capital in that country. Unhappily, it was one of the most melancholy circumstances of the agitation in Ireland that not only had English capital ceased to flow into the country, but it was even being withdrawn from it! He would now ask the attention of the House for a few minutes while he discussed in a practical way the actually existing distress and the remedies that had been proposed for it, because he had passed probably as much of the last six months in the West of Ireland as any hon. Member opposite, and had had opportunities of seeing as well as hearing what was going on in many of the most distressed parts of that district. One word as to the extent of the distress. He did not wish to under-estimate it, and he was well aware that in the South, the West, and the North-West of Ireland it pressed heavily upon the people, and had come on them very suddenly; but when he heard complaints that the Government had not interfered to check its progress, he could only ask what they could have done or attempted that they had not endeavoured to do, and what misery had befallen the people that they had not striven to avert? He might be told, perhaps, that had the Government done their duty, organizations for the distribution of private charity would have been unnecessary. Now, he could never think those organizations superfluous, for it was obvious that in its scope and reach private charity differed very widely from the public Poor Law. It was, of course, impossible for the Poor Law to grapple unaided with the distress as far as isolated cases were concerned. Government could only deal at large in such affairs, and its aid must be given according to general rules. Private charity came in at a particular time, and with the special object of preventing the occurrence of sudden and individual suffering. He trusted, though he heartily believed that the Government had done and were doing all they could to mitigate the distress, that the generous public of England and of other countries would not suppose there was no reason for the continuance of their charitable aid. He knew that under any Government, no matter how willing or how able, there must needs be many opportunities for the beneficial exercise of private charity; and whatever was the end of this terrible and, he hoped, temporary affliction, he trusted it would ever be remembered that in the time of distress men of all classes and of all political parties had united in the common endeavour to relieve a suffering population. He said, then, let there be no check on generous private charity. A very different view, however, of the case was apparently taken by the Irish agitator, who found in it a fair opportunity for recalling the grievances of the past, for raking up buried sorrows, for exasperating the people, and making them more impatient under their suffering. No doubt distress served to strengthen the political position of such a man. He wished to call the attention of the House to some of the more extreme statements that had been made. The hon. and learned Member for Louth (Mr. Sullivan) would be able to corroborate or to deny the report that at a land meeting at Louth he had said—

> "I arraign before the world as guilty of murder the Ministers of the Crown, who, forewarned and forearmed, were allowing already the victims of famine to be consigned to the earth."

What shadow of foundation was there for such a charge? A Government guilty of murder—of killing their fellow-subjects with malice aforethought! Why, there had not been one single instance of death by starvation. Nothing of the sort had happened, and yet the hon. and learned Member had not for a moment hesitated to make that wild accusation. The evil, however, did not end with the mere inaccuracy of the statement, but probably had the effect of staying the flow of charity. Hon. Members who spoke in that way surely knew that by the charitable public such language must be deemed exaggerated, and as conveying a wholly incorrect view of the state of their country. But he begged them not on that account to close the hands that were now open for the assistance of real suffering. He would ask the House to listen to the language of the hon. Member for Meath, who, he was aware, was absent, but who had not taken particular care, in the country where he now was, to spare the absent. The hon. Member for Meath seemed to him (Mr. Plunket) to consider the threatened famine as a kind of monopoly of his own, as an opportunity sent him by good fortune for the advancement and promulgation of his own views and theories as to the Irish Land Laws and the relations that ought to exist between owners and tenants. That hon. Member was reported to have cautioned his hearers against contributing money to the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund, as it would only go into the pockets of those tenants who had obediently paid the last penny of their rent. Further, he said that if the money for relief were given into the hands of the English governing classes, it would inevitably be used for the purpose of demoralizing the people, and, to use his own words, "checking our movement." If that report was correct, he could only say that such statements could be received with little less than loathing. But that was not all. The hon. Member for Meath, in the earlier days of the agitation, when he was exciting the people to rise against their landlords and against the laws of their country—["No, no!"]—against their landlords and laws of their country

—he told them the Heavens were fighting on their side because the rain was coming down, making worse the prospects of famine. Now, what inference could be drawn from those words, except that the hon. Member for Meath hoped starvation would render the people of Ireland more pliable instruments in his hands, and that they would thereby be more easily drawn to his mad and ruinous purposes? But the hon. Member for Meath did not stop at the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund. Even the Dublin Mansion House Fund, together with Sir Arthur Guinness and his own unworthy self, had come under the hon. Member for Meath's sweeping condemnation. The people of America were cautioned against sending money to the Dublin Mansion House Fund. The members of the Committee could not be trusted. They were people who would divert the Fund from its proper purpose. Now, so far as he personally was concerned, such statements only provoked a smile; but if they had the effect of preventing relief being extended to Ireland, then the hon. Member for Meath did his country a grievous wrong. It was unnecessary to vindicate the impartiality of that Committee. Every Catholic and every Protestant Bishop in Ireland could testify to it; and he himself, while radically at variance on most points with the present Lord Mayor, the hon. Member for Tipperary (Mr. Gray), the President of that Fund, felt bound to say that nothing could be more impartial than his action in reference to it. The hon. Member for Tipperary would, he doubted not, do him similar justice in return. [Mr. GRAY: Hear, hear!] Perhaps the House would now allow him, as a relief to the vague disquisitions they had been hearing on the rights and wrongs of landlords, to throw a little practical light on the subject, and draw a picture of the way in which this distress came upon the people. He would refer to the property of Sir Arthur Guinness, the senior Member for Dublin, and challenged contradiction of his statements. On that property there was no difference whatever between the landlord and the tenant. A better landlord there could not be. Absolute harmony and peace prevailed; the rents had not been raised for 20 or 30 years; there had been no evictions, or, if there had been one or two, they had occurred, for the most part, in the hopeless struggle of trying to prevent the sub-division of the land. The proprietor was fortunately one who had wealth from other sources, and he had found it his pleasure and his duty to re-invest in the land more than his real income from it. Therefore, in that case, every element that the agitator could suggest was absent: there was no rack-renting, no absence of security of tenure, no want of works, nothing of that kind. Yet, what had happened there? The part of Ireland in which that property was situated was one of the worst centres of distress. There was an immense number of small tenants, with holdings of from one to five, six, or 10 acres of land, and families of five or six children. It was amongst these people that the distress existed. They were not tenant farmers in the English sense of the word; they were labourers working on their own farms, and the wages of their labour for one year was the following year's crop of potatoes. The wetness of the season had almost destroyed their crop of potatoes. Usually, they had enough to feed themselves and the pig, who sometimes himself paid the rent; but this year there were not enough potatoes to live upon, and they had nothing else. They had exhausted their credit. No rent had even been asked from them, in such cases, for the last year and a-half; but while they owed, perhaps, £2 or £3 to the landlords, they owed some £14 or £16 to the shopkeeper in the neighbourhood. They were an honest, truth-telling, and well-behaved people, and in a good year as happy a people as one could see anywhere. In the beginning of December, when he visited the cottages there with the proprietor, they said they should soon have to begin to eat what they had reserved for seed. Some said they could hold out for some weeks—most of them until the end of February; others that they would just be able to battle through the present year. That showed how difficult it was for the Government to deal with a case of this kind. Were the Government to make railways there? Make a railway to the moon! There was no place to make it to there, and you could not make a starving man walk for 12 miles or so, and come back again, for a day's work, and no railway contractor would employ such men. So with regard to roads. Then, as to reclaiming waste land, they could not go further up the mountains. Above them was the home of the grouse, the snipe, the woodcock, and you could not improve those rocks. As he walked through the property the proprietor saw the people could not help themselves in the position in which they were placed, and he said—"You must eat your seed potatoes, and get on as well as you can; and after that, boys, you may look to me, and you shall not look to me in vain." The first idea suggested by this state of affairs was that, perhaps, the landlord next door had not the means to enable him to act in that way; it was a hard year for the landlords as well as for the tenants. There were some tenants who could not pay, and there were some who could pay but were not allowed to do so. Was the Government to be asked to interfere in a case of that kind? In these circumstances, his hon. Friend and himself gave what help they could to the Committee at Dublin. They also went to the Government Office, to the Executive; and more especially he would refer to Mr. Robinson, the local head of the Irish Poor Law Board, who had spent all his life in the Poor Law service, had gone through the Famine of 1847, than whom a more considerate man could not be found, and who understood the whole business thoroughly. Having told him their story, he satisfied them that everything had been carefully thought over, and that all would be done which could be reasonably or wisely done to relieve those poor people. Now, a good deal had been heard about fixity of tenure and peasant proprietorship as a specific for the state of things which existed in Ireland. It seemed to him, however, he must confess, rather cold comfort to offer such people as those of whom he had been speaking these high-sounding privileges. Fixity of tenure and peasant proprietorship!—to root them in the soil!—to take away the men from them who in bad years like this would have to feed them out of the hollow of their hands in order to save them from starvation! Yes, to root them in the soil, and leave them there till the bad years came, and the famine, and the fever, to make a prey of them! Hon. Members had heard of the Siberian caravans, where the sickly prisoners fell away and were left frozen in the snow till wolves made an end of them. Peasant proprietorship! To make peasant proprietors of such men as those of whom he had been speaking, loaded as they were with debt, without chance of improvement, and devoid of knowledge or enterprize to start with, would be productive of the utmost misery. It would simply secure, and make inevitable, his doom when the bad time came. In saying that, he must not be understood as speaking against peasant proprietorship under other circumstances. He was now simply dealing with it as a specific for the distress which at present prevailed in Ireland. He was not opposed to peasant proprietorship of solvent tenants; but the State must proceed with great caution before attempting to apply such great principles to a case of this kind, taking away their landlord, leaving them without a penny or a friend face to face with the Government when its tax collector came to gather up the instalments of its debt. There was another consideration which occurred to his mind as he saw his hon. Friend followed out of the villages which he visited by old tottering men and women who, holding up their children in their arms, blessed him and prayed for him, and that was to contrast what he saw with the proceedings of the loud-mouthed, swaggering agitator, followed by a Fenian mob, and preceded by a brass band, who told the people of America not to send their money home to this country, because the governing classes here were not to be trusted, as they would misapply it; who told them not to send home money to the ladies of Ireland, because it would not be applied in charity; and who thanked God at the commencement of the distress that the rain was coming down in torrents, soaking the turf, rotting the potatoes, and poisoning the food of the people, so that they might be more ready tools for him to incite on to a bloody resistance. [An hon. MEMBER: It is false!]

MR. O'DONNELL rose to Order. The hon. and learned Gentleman, in addressing the House, had clearly specified his hon. Friend the Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell) as the agitator to whom he was referring. He had just stated that that hon. Member had thanked God for the famine in order to rouse the people of Ireland to a bloody insurrection. He (Mr. O'Donnell) would refrain from characterizing that statement; but he should like to know whether the hon. and learned Gentleman was in Order in making use of such expressions?

MR. SPEAKER said, that if the hon. and learned Member (Mr. Plunket) had charged a Member of the House with inciting the people to a bloody insurrection, such language could not be Parliamentary.

MR. PLUNKET should be sorry in any way to have transgressed the Rules of the House. [*Loud cries of* "Withdraw!"] What he meant to say was this—and if in the heat of debate he had said anything stronger he was willing to withdraw it—that the hon. Member for Meath had, in his speeches, called the attention of the people to the storm and to the rain that was descending, and said that the elements were fighting on his side. He said, further, that he was thankful to the elements for fighting on his side, and the only inference that could be drawn from such language was this —that the people would be themselves the more ready instruments of his agitation; and he (Mr. Plunket) said, and would say again, that that agitation could have no other result, and had had no other result, than to incite the people to a bloody resistance to the law. Well, of course, it would be said that he had spoken of but one landlord, and that he was an exception. Of course there were bad landlords in Ireland, as there were in other countries; but he knew that there were many good landlords in Ireland—landlords who, in spite of all that had been said against them, would be only too glad to relieve those unfortunate tenants whose interests were their interests, though all had not the means to be generous as some were. His lot had been cast among many such landlords; and he could say that, notwithstanding all that they had been exposed to, and bitterly as they resented the unjust language used against them by these agitators, he never heard one word of resentment uttered by any one of them against the people. Well, he had no intention to trace the course of the agitation of the hon. Member for Meath, or to refer to what he would call his revolutionary speeches, or his extraordinary promises as to what the result would be. He had, no doubt, gained great influence over the people of Ireland. For the time he was, as was once said of O'Connell, King of Ireland; and so long as he continued to hold out those hopes, and so long as the people were given any ground to believe that there was any chance of their being realized —although it was impossible that they could be—no man could compete with him, or bid against him, among the people. It was a lamentable thing that language which gave, or seemed to give, encouragement to such wild dreams, had been used, and used by some speakers of great authority in this country. He did not say this merely for the purpose of making a personal or a political attack, although no one loved a Party fight more than he did; but he feared they would hear something by-and-bye as to the evil consequences of such language being used. The House would, he hoped, allow him to refer to one other instance. If hon. Members opposite were to choose what had been represented as specially a bad case, perhaps they would select that of the eviction of Balla, in the county of Mayo, on the property of his kinsman, Sir Robert Blosse, than whom a more kind-hearted man towards his tenantry did not live. Sir Robert had asked him to lay before the House the truth of the story. This was not merely a personal matter, as it bore directly on the question. The estate extended over 23,000 acres, on which were about 400 tenants. The rents for all residential holdings were valued a quarter of a century ago, and they had, with scarcely any exception, never since been raised. The houses were rented at a fair letting value, and the rents for a quarter of a century had been punctually and cheerfully paid on the estate. There had been only five evictions all the time, and only two of these had involved the tenant being actually put out. One of these was the case of Dempsey, and there the rent had been paid willingly until lately, when quarrels arose among the occupiers themselves. It was the old story of a widow and an unmarried son living in the same house with the eldest son, who was married. What were the circumstances of the eviction? The rent was due the 1st November, 1878, and should have been paid before the 1st of May, 1879, when Patrick Dempsey asked for a prolongation of time. That was granted from time to time until August, and up to that date the landlord was willing to take the half-year's rent instead of a year's. It then became evident, however, that there was no intention of paying the rent, for Dempsey had joined in the anti-rent agitation for the purpose of preventing others paying their rent; therefore, an ejectment for the year's rent due the 1st of May, 1879, was served. The Sheriff, on the 15th of November, proceeded to take possession, but finding a child ill of the measles he went away, saying he would return in a week if the rent was not paid, and Dempsey undertook to pay it, and would have done so, but that local agitators prevented him, and promised to pay it for him afterwards if he would allow himself to be ejected. Sir Robert was threatened, and they defied him to carry out the ejectment. Infamous placards were posted on the subject. A monster meeting was called, and finally the hon. Member for Meath came to encourage the people and addressed a mob meeting the day the Sheriff was expected. The Sheriff did not come, and so bloodshed was prevented. Subsequently possession was given to Sir Robert Blosse. After the eviction a number of falsehoods were circulated through the Press. It was said that Dempsey and his family slept on the road, and that Sir Robert directed his agent to give them no shelter. That was false. Dempsey and some of his family went direct to the hotel at Balla, the others to a neighbour's house, and they all returned to the farm in 10 days, when the rent was paid. It was also said that Dempsey's family were ill with fever. That was not true. The doctor certified that one had fever, but that the other, who had had measles, had recovered. The younger had given to the elder brother an amount of money sufficient to pay the rent; but the latter applied the amount to other purposes. He asked what the landlord could do under these circumstances? The landlord knew the people were well able to pay their rent. Was he to submit, and have his rights set at nought? It was important for the House to consider what, if anything, should be done in the case of persons who took to courses of this kind — a question which it was most important to discuss before attempting to arrive at a decision concerning the question now before the House, which could not be done without giving attention to the object of the revolutionary agitation which was now and had for some time past been going forward. The two objects which were principally urged as those sought to be attained by the supporters of the Amendment to the Address were fixity of tenure on the payment of fair rents and tenant proprietorship. Unless both political Parties were very untrue to all they had ever said or done, there could be no possibility of such an agitation proving successful. He did not intend then to discuss the principles of fixity of tenure, for the whole of the subject had been a hundred times thrashed out from beginning to end. In 1870, these very proposals were made on the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich, and by overwhelming majorities, and by the arguments of the right hon. Gentleman himself and his Colleagues, it was utterly repudiated. Only the other day, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham, who, he supposed, well represented the left wing of the Liberal Party, showed that it was impractical to establish fixity of tenure on farms, and in the current number of the old Whig Quarterly its fallacies were conclusively exposed. As regarded the last of these objects he had no objection in principle to it; but he should venture to insist that the peasant proprietorship should also be a solvent proprietorship, and that the experiment should be made in so slow and cautious a way that such a class of insolvent tenant occupiers should be precluded from becoming a race of bankrupt proprietors. The hon. Member for Reading (Mr. Shaw Lefevre), who had taken great interest in the subject, had, he thought, not correctly stated the other day what took place in the Committee which sat to inquire into the working of the Bright Clauses of the Land Act. The hon. Member seemed to infer that his proposal on the subject had received the unanimous sanction of that Committee last year, and that it would be at once passed into law; but that was not the case, for what the Committee were really very nearly unanimous about was that it would be a good thing if peasant proprietors could be established in Ireland of a solvent character. He (Mr. Plunket) had proposed that as an Amendment in the Committee, and he was still willing to have the experiment tried.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE remarked, that what he stated was that the Resolution which he proposed to the House itself was adopted unanimously.

MR. PLUNKET said, he had never resisted the most extreme proposal ever put forward by the hon. Member for Reading in the interest of the landlords. He supported the Resolution of last Session, because it merely proposed to create proprietary tenants in Ireland, and he was in favour of the experiment; but he submitted that that must be done with great caution, or they would not avoid the dangers which had been described of creating a proprietary of poor men whose present insolvency precluded them from becoming real proprietors at all. So far as the plans of the hon. Member for Reading went, this was no Party question, and he was in favour of the experiment being tried. But it must be approached with great caution in the interest of the State which was to lend, and still more of the tenant who was to borrow. He had never opposed it in the interest of the landlords; indeed, he believed that in the case of some landlords it might prove beneficial; for it would enable them to escape from their difficulties and sell their present property. But quite another proposal, however, had now been whispered abroad, and it was to that that he particularly desired to call the attention of the House. He referred to the wild words which had been rashly spoken as to the compulsory expropriation of estates—words which, having been spoken in the first instance by the hon. Member for Meath, had since been, to some extent, adopted by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich. He (Mr. Plunket), however, must earnestly protest against them. He contended that it was a mischievous and impossible proposal, and that it should be denounced as early as possible, so that the Irish people should not be misled. The hon. Member for Meath had said—

> "I have pointed out that we had, besides the estates of the London Companies, and the estates of the absentee owners, which we might fairly call upon the Government forcibly to expropriate. I have stopped short up to the present at resident owners, who live in the country, who are not rack-renters, and do their duty; but I cannot say that the line will continue to be drawn even with them in the future, and that if these times, and this pressure are to proceed, the whole institution of landlordism will not come down altogether."

He did not know whether the right hon. Member for Birmingham had read that sentence or not; but he had advocated the forcible expropriation of the London Companies. In his opinion, that was sailing dangerously near the wind, and was likely to encourage a formidable agitation. It was also exceedingly unfortunate that the right hon. Member for Greenwich, in one of his wonderful speeches in Scotland, while deprecating, on the whole, the theory of small proprietors, should have used formidable and suggestive language. He had said—

> "It is not intended, probably, to confiscate the property of a landed proprietor more than the property of any other man; but the State is perfectly entitled, if it please, to buy out the landed proprietors, as it may think fit, for the purpose of dividing the property into small lots."

And again—

> "I freely admit that compulsory expropriation is a thing which, for an adequate public object, is itself admissible, and, so far, sound in principle."

The right hon. Gentleman, he supposed, grounded his statement upon the right that the State possessed to authorize railways to compulsorily purchase land. But this was a case in which it was proposed to forcibly transfer the property of one whole class to another. Was there, or was there not, to be compulsory expropriation? Was there any precedent in English history for a compulsory taking of the property of one class of the people and transferring it to another? That was what the Irish tenant understood. [*Cries of* "No!" *from the Irish Members.*] If hon. Members opposite repudiated that desire, if they thought that the proposal should be carried out only as far as the landlords might be disposed to assent to the arrangement, then he heartily retracted all the hard words he had uttered on this part of the subject. Seeing the hon. and learned Member for Louth (Mr. Sullivan) in his place, reminded him that a very lively correspondence had appeared in the public newspapers lately. The hon. and learned Member appeared to have been devoting himself lately to bringing about that agreement between the Home Rulers and the Whigs, which had resulted in such eminent success down at Liverpool. The hon. and learned Member had come to town yesterday covered with glory; he was the hero of the hour, having effected a reconciliation between the most determined Nationalists and the most spotless Whigs, supporters of the noble Lord. But the better to accomplish his purpose, the hon. and learned Member asserted that it was an unwarrantable statement that the Whigs were trying to drive a bargain with the Home Rulers—in fact, the whole Home Rule movement, as he had hinted, was a Conservative plot. [Mr. PLUNKET here quoted from a *Times* leading article.]

MR. SULLIVAN rose to explain that he did not say what was imputed to him.

MR. PLUNKET: But that was the effect of it, and the inference to be drawn from what the hon. and learned Member said——

MR. SULLIVAN rose to explain——

[*Cries of* "Order, order!" *and* "Chair!"]

MR. SPEAKER ruled that the hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin was in possession of the House.

MR. PLUNKET, resuming, said, that what he had quoted was the result produced on the public mind, and although what the hon. and learned Gentleman himself said was a little different, it was not very different. His letter had conveyed the impression that such was his meaning, and it had excited the surprise of that excellent journal, *The Times.* He thought that according to the impression caused in the public Press by the hon. and learned Gentleman's revelations at Liverpool as to the formation of the Home Rule Party, it would have been as well if he had kept the matter to himself. He (Mr. Plunket) could speak from some personal knowledge upon the subject, and he believed the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, who, at the time, had managed all election matters for his Party in Ireland, could corroborate what he said. The Home Rule movement, it was true, had with it in its origin a good many Conservatives, though he could not admit that the late Mr. Butt was one of their number; but the Conservative authorities did everything in their power to prevent their sheep straying into that very attractive camp. The fact was that some Irish Conservatives were very angry in consequence of the passing of the Irish Church Act, not only with the Liberals, but also with their own Friends, for not having, as they thought, made as good a fight for them as they might have done, and for a short time they gave support to the Home Rule movement; but it was against the advice of the Party. As to the allegation that Conservative money was given in Tipperary for the election of a Home Rule Member, he had heard that a gentleman named Roe, a member of a very respectable Conservative family, but who held very strong views himself, of his own accord, and without any consultation with the Conservative Leaders, advanced £500 for O'Donovan Rossa's candidature, and in the case of the other election which had been referred to, the hon. and gallant Member for Sligo (Colonel King-Harman) fought it at his own expense. The Conservative Party had nothing to do with it; it was a Home Rule, and not a Conservative, candidature. There was an election for the City of Dublin in 1870 which might, for the present purpose, be regarded as a test election, and the hon. and gallant Gentleman stood; but, as a matter of fact, the Leaders of the Conservative Party refused to vote for him, though asked to do so. Liverpool was past and over; but Southwark and other elections were coming on, and they would have again this kind of Whig-Home-Rule candidate authorized by the highest authority. From a Party point of view he did not object to their doing it, for he thought it would not be successful; but they should not accuse the Conservative Party of doing what they had never done. The hon. and learned Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt), who he was sorry not to see in his place—he noticed the hon. and learned Gentleman had been in great personal danger in a cab, and sincerely hoped that nothing had happened to him—had been speaking in Liverpool. There was no one in that House who enjoyed more thoroughly than himself the clever speeches of his hon. and learned Friend, although he was sometimes amused by the superb arrogance of his self-assertion, and amazed at the rollicking recklessness with which he dealt with serious subjects. His hon. and learned Friend, as an excuse for the present dealings of his Friends with the Home Rule Party, had made a vigorous attack about the appointment of his hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Sligo to the Lord Lieutenancy of a county. The hon. and gallant Gentleman was made Lord Lieutenant of the county of Sligo, as he understood, because he possessed a property of some £40,000 a-year in the county, because of his great position and popularity in the county, and also because he was one of the ablest country gentlemen, and one than whom none had done more for the good of all classes of the people. On these grounds, no better appointment could have been made; but, as far as his Home Rule views were concerned, he believed they went far towards losing it for him. At Liverpool the Home Rulers, wiser by their experience at Sheffield, put their test to the Liberal candidate in a form which he was sorry to say was accepted in a way which was declared to be entirely satisfactory to the Nationalist Party. It was this bargaining—this trafficking in dangerous political questions — that those on his side of the House objected to; and he would tell them why. Where were these things to stop? Liverpool and Sheffield were not the only towns where that game might be played. How many supporters of that stamp and colour did the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition wish to welcome into that House? Events marched rapidly in our day. In a debate on the demand for an Irish Parliament on the 24th of April, 1877, the noble Lord was reported to have said—

> "I am bound to say that the effect, the necessary effect, will be to deceive the Irish people. What has happened in certain constituencies is likely to happen again. There are many English constituencies in which the Irish vote is an extremely important element, and that vote can be secured by an apparently harmless pledge. To vote for a Select Committee pledges a Member to absolutely nothing. The liability of the candidate is discharged by an annual vote, and even if the Motion were carried, he feels that the integrity of the British Empire would not be in the least impaired. But in Ireland the effect is very different."

The noble Lord had been a Member of a Cabinet as Chief Secretary for Ireland, and knew what he was talking about. And the noble Lord, on the occasion to which he (Mr. Plunket) was referring, added—

> "The pledge given is not minutely examined. It is known that the candidate having pledged himself to something which sounds very like Home Rule the agitation is thereby prolonged, and groundless hopes, which otherwise would have passed away, and which it would be best should be as soon as possible destroyed, are raised and sustained."—[3 *Hansard*, ccxxxiii. 1839.]

He would like to push this matter further home; but time would not allow of his doing so. He had only now to thank the House most cordially for listening to him so long, and if he had not succeeded in carrying his voice to all those whom he addressed, it was in consequence of the best argument in the world for Home Rule—namely, the fogs which at the beginning of the Session so often prevailed in this capital.

MR. SULLIVAN ventured to say that in all the annals of Parliament a more extraordinary display than the speech they had just heard could not be found. They were now supposed to be discussing an Amendment which raised the question of misery or suffering and, it might be, of untold horrors in Ireland—the question of an impending famine; and when the Ministers of the Crown had complained but yesterday that it would be a waste of time to speak of things germane to that subject, their champion put up there to-night to make their pugilistic fight all round the arena had treated them to all sorts of irrelevant matters. They had had a speech from the Leader of the Opposition on Home Rule; then the Sheffield election; then an attack on the hon. and learned Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt); and then the narrative of the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Plunket) of the connection of the Tories with Home Rule, and of which he knew nothing whatever. Then they were treated to a noisy crow over the diminished majority by which his Party had managed to hold a seat for a while in Liverpool; and then they heard Mr. Gladstone's views on local government. ["Order, order!"] Well, the hon. and learned Gentleman used the name himself; but what would he say to the views of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich on local government? Next they were treated to a panegyric on the hon. and learned Gentleman's own family connections and kindred, and the time of the House was taken up while he was extolling, and justly extolling, the merits of his cousin. The hon. and learned Gentleman would note, perhaps, that whenever he praised an Irish landlord he was cheered from that side of the House; while when he struck a blow at an absent man he was sure of exultation from his own Friends. Mark, all this occurred in a debate on the Irish Famine! He complimented the hon. and learned Gentleman in that, at all events, when he struck at him (Mr. Sullivan) personally, he was present. But he took good advantage of the absence of a man, before whose face he would shrink from saying what he had done. He had followed the evil example of the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis). The House was crowded now, but, unfortunately, it was empty when that hon. Member spoke; and, therefore, he would tell that crowded Chamber that they had, by their absence, missed the greatest histrionic treat ever witnessed on the floor of that House. That hon. Member had also attacked the hon. Member for Meath. [*Laughter.*] Well, at any rate, the hon. Member had crossed the Atlantic on an embassy—[*Ironical laughter.*]—Well, on an important errand; and because he had done so, he was described, forsooth, as having decamped from this country. Well, at any rate, he had not gone on the service of bondholders in connection with any re-construction schemes, or as the emissary of some London financiers. As for the hon. Member for Meath, they must admit he had gone on an unselfish errand. ["Oh, oh!"] Let it be remembered, also, that the hon. Member was himself an Irishman, and had gone there, not to arrest the flow of charity, but to promote it; and, side by side with that object, to make an appeal to the American people in order that these perpetual needs of charity for Ireland might be put an end to for ever. If the hon. Member for Meath had done and said things which he himself might condemn—if he had said, "Do not send money to this committee," he had also said, "Do send it to the other." If he thought part of the story was suppressed by the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite—and he knew he was suppressing it—when he said, "Do not send to the Mansion House Committee, or to the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund!" he did say, "Send to the Land League Fund." And who set the hon. Member for Meath the example in saying that? The example of Dublin itself. There was issued to the Press of England, and to all the public bodies of England, a notification, which must have reminded those who read it of the announcements of rival costermongers in connection with the shop over the way. The message from the Vice-regal Lodge was, "Do not send to the Mansion House, but send to me;" while, for his part, as long as any promoters of these funds sent to anyone at all, he, for himself, would not complain. He was curious to know whether these attacks on an absent man, which should be checked from the Chair, would be repeated when the hon. Member returned to that House, and whether somebody else would not find it necessary to decamp to Canada or the United States? The hon. and learned Gentleman opposite had not been put up—he had sprung up voluntarily—to tell the story of the action of his Party, and the origin of the Home Rule movement. What could he know of it? He took good care to keep away from the generous men of his Party who made that effort. What could he know about meetings he had never attended, and speeches and representations that he had never read? The only accusation against himself and his fellow-Members was that they were guilty of not believing the words of Conservative Gentlemen when, in language that would move that Assembly, they swore by High Heaven—oh, those Conservative oaths!—when they swore in the most solemn and sincere language that if he and his Friends would but link hands with them in a common effort for their common good, and would only put on one side the distrust which Irish Catholics were said to have of their Protestant fellow-countrymen—if they would only cease to be factionists and become Irishmen, that they, the Conservatives, would be true to the death in the effort which they then invited him and his Friends to make for the re-setting up of an institution which was Protestant before—with which the noble memories of Protestant Ireland were associated, and with which the only noble traditions of the hon. and learned Member's (Mr. Plunket's) name were indissolubly linked. The hon. and learned Member had said that there were only a few Conservatives who joined the movement; that they only kept their word for a very short time, and that they only acted as they did because they were irritated. In answer to that, he would only ask the House, ever fair as it always was in matters of this kind, to hear him out on this matter, which was in a measure personal to himself. When the Irish Church fell in Ireland, the hon. and learned Gentleman would recollect that the leading Conservative organ of the country declared that the "hateful Gladstone" had severed the bond of union and had broken the Treaty contained in the Act of Union. He admitted that the charge was true, for the 7th Article of the Union declared that the maintenance of the Irish Protestant Church was an essential and fundamental condition of the Union of Ireland. He felt that, and he agreed that, those Protestant Conservatives who then came forward and said to him—"Here, we have kept our troth with England as long as she kept faith with us; but now union has been destroyed, will you, so long estranged or opposed to us Irish Catholics and Nationalists, join us in an effort to establish the Irish Parliament? Will you promise to aid us in an attempt to give to an Imperial Parliament the control of Imperial affairs? For, if you do, we pledge ourselves to you with regard to personally endeavouring to obtain a Parliament which, so far as domestic affairs, shall be supreme." Were the men who offered this few in number? On the contrary. Two of them, whom the hon. and learned Member now tried to disparage, were his most determined and active agents at his election. But though they were now unorthodox Conservatives, it was not for Party purposes to disavow them that night. These Conservative Gentlemen sent out a printed circular inviting him and others to attend the meeting. They did not invite the hon. and learned Gentleman, because they only consulted men of prominence and men of position among their Party in Dublin; and though the hon. and learned Gentleman, with a modesty which was peculiarly Hibernian, had spoken of himself as one of the Leaders in the Party of Ireland, he was a young Leader then. At that time he was almost unknown amongst Conservative politicians in Dublin, and he could appeal in support of that statement to hon. Gentlemen opposite who were in Ireland when all this took place, and who were now listening to him. He attended the meeting; and, so far from those present being nobodies, and there being but few Conservatives, he could tell that honourable House that though men of every political Party and creed were present, they were yet in the minority as compared with the Conservatives, who numbered between 60 and 70—all the foremost gentlemen of Dublin. Was Mr. Edward W. Kinahan a nobody, whose high social position could not be denied, nor the position he held in the Conservative Party? Mr. James Hope Mackie was also present, and in the Conservative Party. Then, as now, there was no man more prominent and more trusted than he, yet he was one of the foremost founders of this Home Rule movement, and one of the particular men by whose entreaty he was led into the error of trusting in the word and honour of Conservative gentlemen. Mr. Purden, the then Lord Mayor of Dublin, was present, than whom there was not a more prominent Party man in the whole City of Dublin. He also saw there the editor of *The Dublin Evening Mail;* and who did not know the politics of that paper? The late Lord Mayor (Sir John Barrington); Mr. Wilde; Mr. Boyle, the banker; Mr. Maden, of Hoden, once the Grand Master of the Orangemen of Ireland, were also amongst the men who, on that occasion, founded and established the Home Rule movement in Ireland. He was warned at the time by friends of his own that he ought not to trust those Conservative Protestants. To the knowledge of hon. Members sitting round him, he was personally singled out for invective by the Whig organs of the day at that time, and told that if once the Tory Party got into power these men would break their faith, discard them, turn round, and pretend that they were playing a part. But if there had been chicanery and dishonour, he knew with whom it lay; and that night he declared that he felt it was better to have trusted and to have been deceived than never to have trusted at all—even with the bitter example before him of the result of this attempt to banish sentiment and to trust in Conservative representations. If to-morrow the same thing were going to be done again, he would rather see his co-religionists trust these Conservative gentlemen once more than that a hateful spirit should be raised by declaring that the words of a Protestant and Conservative gentleman could not be believed. Next, as to the money. The hon. and learned Gentleman had said that Mr. Roe, no doubt, supplied the funds for a Fenian candidature in Tipperary.

Mr. PLUNKET: I said that I had heard it, and had good reason to believe it.

Mr. SULLIVAN said, he would soon set the innocent soul of the hon. and learned Member at rest. It was a brother Conservative and a Constitutional Tory who supplied the money for the candidature of O'Donovan Rossa in Tipperary. If he could believe the newspapers, that statement of his had been contradicted by a Member of the Government, who had dared to say that it was not true. He could only say, in reply, that he could point to a document signed by Mr. Roe, the Constitutional Conservative, by which he became security for the Fenian candidate's Petition against the election, and on which security he was mulcted in heavy costs; and so much did Fenians feel their indebtedness to their Conservative ally that, with a sense of honour that did them credit, they raised a public subscription, and one of their number, with a chivalry quite characteristic of Tiperary, crossed the Atlantic—decamped, as the agent of some financial establishment somewhere or other might call it—and there collected the money to refund the sum they had advanced for their candidature. He would add, for the benefit of the hon. and learned Gentleman, that every one of these statements of his were literally true. He had asserted nothing that was of a private nature, and, therefore, nothing that was discreditable to the Conservatives or the Home Rulers. No secret understanding was created. There was no intrigue. It was the honest, manly, and patriotic endeavour of men in both camps to grasp hands, and see if they could not find a common platform upon which to work for the benefit of their countrymen. It was a holy example of a country like Ireland, torn, as it was, by this warfare. Yet that rainbow set in the stormy sky of Ireland had been the subject of a torrent of invective by the grandson of Plunket. Surely the bones of the dead must rattle in their shrouds! The hon. and learned Gentleman had quoted something he (Mr. Sullivan) was reported to have said in the newspapers, and had very properly prefaced the quotation by the phrase, "if correctly reported." He was accused of having said that the Government, forewarned and forearmed, had allowed the people to perish, and that he would accuse them before Parliament of the crime of murder. He was himself not in the habit of writing out his speeches, for the only two occasions on which he did so he made a miserable mess of it; but that passage he had written out before, and he was incorrectly reported. He had, however, such a horror of the appearance of shrinking from what he had said outside, that he preferred to own the words and stand by them, although they were incorrect and did not correctly represent his language. He had always tried to act on the principle, if he was guilty of moderation—which was very seldom—of trying to be moderate when he spoke to his own countrymen, and to go to the other extreme when in the presence of his opponents there. He would repeat now what had been suppressed, or, at any rate, not mentioned, by the model of judicious force who had just sat down, and who was destined some day to be a Judge; but he was old enough to have seen the horrors of 1847. Though but a boy, he felt maddened, as it were, at the spectacle of that evil time. But at that time he vowed and swore—as he hoped many Irishmen, looking on the corpses that strewed the roadways on that day, did also—that never again, if act or word of his could avert it, should a similar disaster come down upon the land. He knew the action of the Government at that time, its vacillation, and its murderous delay; and because of those memories, and because of those dreadful experiences, he declared to his constituents that he would accuse the Government of wilful murder, because, though forewarned and forearmed, they were again allowing the people to perish, and were not averting the spread of famine in their land. He would say it now if he did not say it then. They were asked to specify anything that the Government might have done which they had not done. While, neither in Ennis, in Connemara, nor in any part of Connaught, had they provided any kind of reproductive employment in preference to the demoralization of charity. In the western part of his own individual county of Cork, they had not put 1,000, or even 100, men to work, nor had they spent £1,000 to save the dying people. The hon. and learned Gentleman, who came too late into public life to know the terrible scenes of that time, had pretended to describe what was being done, as if that applied to the whole of Ireland. But there was an authority superior even to that great legal luminary. Even in 1822—how long, alas! had that House been waiting to do its duty—Mr. Munroe, reporting on the state of Ennis, which covered 600 square miles, had reported that it would maintain an increased population of at least 200,000 souls, and had remarked that the uncultivated state of those districts marked them out as a proper field for public works undertaken by Government. What did Lord John Russell do in 1847? He proposed a Vote of £1,000,000 for the purpose of bringing waste lands under cultivation; but the landed proprietors requested him to withdraw the proposition, promising to reclaim the lands themselves. That offer was exactly the same as the one Government were about to propose for relieving the suffering people of Ireland that day. It was the same old and weary story. Always Government promises; always something going to be done; always some plan ready for proposal; yet nothing ever done, and the people again on the verge of starvation. Why, the coroners' inquests were better authority even than the hon. and learned Gentleman; for in Ireland even the coroners were beginning to return deaths from starvation. He read, only the other day, of a poor creature whom now he supposed would be tried for her life, who had cut the throat of her little child, declaring that it was better it should go to heaven at once than suffer the continual pains of hunger. In another case a wretched man, evicted for non-payment of rent, which he could not pay by reason of the distress, going to see the old homestead which had sheltered him so long, lost his reason, and was now in an asylum for the present. The hon. and learned Gentleman came there to prophesy pleasant things. If there was a gleam of sunshine, he told them that the Irish tenantry had millions in the savings banks, and were prosperous, happy, and contented. A bad season came, and Ireland was exhibited in the miserable guise of the public beggar of the world. What nation ever had so often to seek the charity of other nations as this country which England managed, and for which she was responsible? For his part, he blushed to see the miserable pictures exhibited in the streets of London, of a wretched, famished, hideous, decrepit creature being relieved by a noble, handsome old gentleman feeding it. That was Ireland, fed by John Bull, out of his bounty. That was the picture some people wished to print on the page of history, so that to-morrow, and the next day, and for ever, their efforts to obtain for themselves right and liberty might be met with the taunt that they were beggars, whom the Government fed. Let the Government give them their own Legislature, even though the measure were passed by Conservatives, whose words ought not to be trusted. Let them but have a Government and a Legislature in Dublin, composed even of the 103 men who now sat in that House, and he would willingly make them a present of the excited Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis); and, before a month would have passed, that Body, whether composed of Gentlemen sitting on one side of the House or the other, would have adopted measures that would put an end, at once and for ever, to those recurrent miseries, diseases, and sufferings which disfigured the whole face of Irish history.

MR. J. LOWTHER: Though the House is doubtless anxious to bring this discussion to a close, I shall venture, with its permission, to detain hon. Members while I make a few replies to some statements uttered during this debate. Without trespassing at any length on the indulgence of the House, I may observe that the speech of the hon. and learned Member who has just sat down was looked forward to with considerable interest. He made himself responsible for two very serious charges against Her Majesty's Government.

MR. SULLIVAN: The right hon. Gentleman misrepresents me. Her Majesty's Government were in no way referred to. The present Ministry were at that time in Opposition.

MR. J. LOWTHER: The hon. and learned Gentleman, at any rate, spoke of the Conservative Party, "of Leaders, Chiefs, and agents." All I can say is, that the ordinary reader of those words would never infer that Leaders and Chiefs of the Conservative Party would eventually be brought down to the highly respectable, no doubt, but certainly not very conspicuous, personages who figure in the hon. and learned Gentleman's speech. It appears, in fact, that certain local politicians engaged with the hon. and learned Member and others to establish the Home Rule Party. But the hon. and learned Gentleman, when speaking before his constituents, made another and a far more serious charge, one which I think he will hardly deny we are bound to take notice of in this place. He certainly was represented to have said that Her Majesty's Government had been guilty of the crime of murder. I understood him to admit the substantial accuracy of those words, and they bear the interpretation of a deliberate charge against the Irish Government of having left Her Majesty's subjects to die of famine. What has become of that charge? The hon. and learned Member has spoken to-night of chivalry. He interpreted that word to mean as forbidding an attack in this debate on another hon. Member, because that hon. Member, for reasons best known to himself, has chosen to absent himself from his place in Parliament. The hon. and learned Member also defines chivalry as an obligation to accept the responsibility of words he never uttered. The hon. and learned Member, with his ideas of chivalry, allows to be attributed to him a charge of wilful murder against the Members of the Government, and when called upon to make good that serious charge, it resolves itself into certain statements against Mr. Secretary Goulburn, and to the allegation that certain persons had lost their reason through the famine. It is trifling with the indulgence of the House for the hon. and learned Member to stand up in his place and undertake to vindicate so serious a charge by evidence so wholly inadequate. As a matter of fact, however, I will undertake to say that no deaths from starvation have as yet occurred in Ireland. I am not now merely fortified by official documents or by Reports of Government officials, but I have also the statement of persons who are responsible for the charitable organizations, who state that, so far, starvation has happily caused no deaths in Ireland. I cannot, at this hour of the morning, undertake to follow the whole course of this debate. I can only repeat, in a very few words, what has been already stated by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the Government, without waiting for the actual occurrence of famine, have already carried out large advances for the purpose of works by landowners, by sanitary authorities, and others. Although the Poor Laws are humane enactments, not obsolete legislation, but Acts of Parliament of comparatively recent origin, which have been the subject of review during recent times, and upon which the Government might in ordinary circumstances fairly rely, we have felt it our duty to accept the responsibility of relaxing the strictness of those laws. Exception has been taken to our conduct, and certain suggestions have been made. It is needless for me to say that I am unable to express my concurrence with hardly any of these suggestions. If I had time I would point out that the suggestions made, however good or bad, as remedies for distress in the ordinary condition of the country, are totally improper and beside the mark in dealing with the settlement of this question of famine. The hon. Member for Tralee (the O'Donoghue) has talked of lending money to tenants. He has not told us upon what security. All he has told us is that he objects to the tenants paying back either principal or interest. [The O'DONOGHUE: Not when lent to the landlord.] I presume that means that the tenant is to spend it, and the landlord to repay it. Other suggestions have been made, such as fixity of tenure, and its twin brother, peasant proprietorship. My opinions upon both these subjects are tolerably well known; and I shall certainly not trouble the House by further reference to them, except to say that the suggestion that a struggling tenant should for 38 years pay an annual increased rent, appears to me a truly Hibernian remedy for exceptional distress. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) spoke of the extension to the whole of Ireland of what is commonly known as the Ulster tenant custom, and he says that on a former occasion I spoke of that suggestion of his as pure and undiluted Communism. That, Sir, is a statement that I did make, and which I am quite ready to repeat now. It was my opinion when I made it, and it is my opinion now. I confess I have been somewhat taken to task for making that speech. For instance, a very able and learned Gentleman who formerly occupied a seat in this House, and who is now a member of the Judicial Bench in Ireland, told me that I was quite wrong in speaking in that way. I, of course, listened, thinking I was going to receive a reproof after the fashion of that which was administered to me by the hon. Member for Cork. "Communism" (said the witty and learned Judge) "I always understood to mean that everybody should have a share. But by this the landlords get nothing." I must confess the justice of his reproof, and by that correction my previous remark must be construed. I still, however, adhere to my statement that this remedy for Irish distress would partake of the character of Communism. Much has been said of the present state of the Land Laws; but I have no hesitation in saying that they have nothing to do with the present state of Ireland. It is certainly true that an unprincipled agitation has been conducted against that system of Land Laws which has had a most baneful effect. It has not only banished capital from the country, but it has prevented the landlords from doing what they were desirous to do, and what I have every reason to believe they would have done—namely, have afforded employment on their estates. Thus, those who have promoted that agitation have done more to cause famine and promote distress than any weakness of the law. I cannot at this hour go further into this matter; but I think it will be the wish of the House that this debate, which was adjourned in order that hon. Members from Ireland might have good opportunities of discussing this question, should now be brought to a conclusion, and that at another stage any further questions should be raised.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY moved the adjournment of the debate.

THE O'GORMAN MAHON seconded the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." —(*Mr. Mitchell Henry.*)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I am sorry for this delay in the proceedings of the House; but, at the same time, I am perfectly well aware that this is a subject in which many Irish Members are much interested, and on which some still desire to speak. I am, therefore, quite ready to consent to the adjournment; but I hope there will be no objection to proceed with my Motion for leave to introduce the Bill of the Government. Hon. Members will see that, whatever may be the result of the discussion in which we are now engaged, the proceedings of the Government cannot be stopped, and that they must, at all events, introduce this Bill. I am sure it will be for the convenience of hon. Members that the Bill should be in their hands as soon as possible.

MR. SHAW was sure there would be no objection on the part of his hon. Friends to the course proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Motion *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *Monday* next.

MOTIONS.

RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND) BILL:

LEAVE. FIRST READING.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I now rise to ask leave to introduce a Bill to render valid certain proceedings which have been taken to relieve the distress in Ireland, and to make further provision for such relief. I have already in the course of this evening explained in general terms what the course of the Government has been, and what the principal provisions of the Bill which I propose to introduce are. I think it will not be necessary that I should now take up the time of the House with any further explanation of those provisions. There is only one point on which I ought to say a word of explanation. With reference to the proposition found in the Bill, that a certain proportion of the advances shall be made on the security of the Fund now administered by the Irish Church Temporalities Commission, I wish to explain that the Bill is so drawn as to give power to those Commissioners to raise money, to a certain extent, upon the security of the proceeds of the Fund, and that money so advanced will not be entirely lost to the Fund, because it will be in the nature of an advance which is to be ultimately repaid. Of course, it will take more time than the advances from the sister Fund. With regard to the reasons for that proposition, my principal reason is that we are making these advances upon a different principle from that which we adopted in the case of the original advance. I think, therefore, that it is more convenient, as these advances are made upon exceptional grounds and upon exceptional principles, that they should be made from a fund which is exceptional in its character. I feel that there would be considerable difficulty, if, instead of doing that, we made these advances from the Exchequer balances, in meeting claims which might be advanced from other parts of the United Kingdom. There is one other thing I wish to say with regard to what is called the Irish Church Surplus. I think there is a considerable amount of misconception with regard to the nature of that Fund. The circumstances in which the property administered by the Irish Church Temporalities Commissioners now is are these. They receive a considerable annual income, speaking roughly, of about £600,000, derived partly from the tithes, partly from rents and perpetuity charges. Upon that there are various charges, the main one being for the re-payment of the debt which they have incurred to the National Debt Commissioners. When the Irish Church Act was passed, a large advance was made from the funds in the hands of the National Debt Commissioners to the Irish Church Commissioners in order to enable them to carry through the operations of that system. That Fund has been gradually reduced, but it still amounts to the large sum of £5,700,000. Now, the Irish Temporalities Commissioners are bound, in the first place, to pay interest on the amount of debt outstanding, and also all other charges upon the Fund. The balance, whatever it may be each year, is to go in re-payment of the principal of the debt, although there is no fixed sum which they are annually bound to re-pay. At present, the charges come to so much that the annual surplus available for re-payment does not amount to more than between £200,000 and £300,000 a-year. Of course, every charge you lay upon the Fund is in the nature of a postponement of the re-payment to the National Debt Commissioners. Now, at the rate at which the reduction of the debt is proceeding at the present time, it will be cancelled somewhere about 1893 or 1894. But these charges which we are about to lay on the Fund will defer still longer the re-payment of the debt. I shall have, during the Session, to lay proposals before the House with regard to the Fund in order to regulate the principle of re-payment. I mention that, because it is convenient now; but the point has no direct connection with the propositions made in the present Bill, which is that the sum of £500,000 shall be charged upon the property of the Irish Church Temporalities Commission, and that that sum shall be advanced. There will be no difficulty in making the necessary financial arrangements, and I hope the House will sanction the first reading of the Bill. I do not at present challenge any expression of opinion upon it, and I only make this explanation because it refers to a part of the Bill I have as yet had no opportunity to mention.

Mr. CHILDERS, without at present raising any objection to the course proposed, said, he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would explain a little more minutely the process by which these loans were to be made. If he understood rightly, the Church Temporalities Commission in Ireland had no fund whatever of its own, but was in debt to the extent of between £5,000,000 and £6,000,000 to the Savings Banks of the United Kingdom, which debt was very slowly being paid off. When, therefore, it was proposed to charge the Church Temporalities Fund with these loans, it meant nothing more nor less than that the Savings Banks would really find the money—either actually advancing it, or deducting it from the re-payments to them. On the other hand, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not explained who would be responsible for the security of the loans. At present all money advanced by the Government, whether directly from the Exchequer or indirectly from the Savings Banks Fund, was advanced upon the responsibility of some public body, whom the public required to be satisfied as to the security. He wished to know who would be the agency to satisfy the public and the Government of the security for each advance, and who would direct the Church Temporalities Commissioners to provide the principal.

Mr. SHAW quite agreed that this was hardly the time to discuss the questions referred to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, especially as they would receive a good deal of discussion from that part of the House. He saw the force of the various reasons that the right hon. Gentleman had given in support of the measure; and probably, when they came to discuss the Bill more fully, they would find that the means proposed was the best way to get the money. It might be, however, that some things in the Bill would require immediate action; and he would beg the right hon. Gentleman not to postpone doing those things on which the lives of a number of people might depend until the termination of a discussion which, no matter how good their intentions, might occupy a considerable time. With regard to the question of extending the operation of out-door relief, he had no doubt there were many districts where it ought to be instituted at once; and he had no doubt, if the Government would take upon itself the responsibility of directing the Irish Local Government Board to issue the necessary orders, that the House would sanction their action.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE asked at what rate the loan would be made by the Public Works Loan Commissioners, as without that information he could not understand what the exact loss would be from the difference between the two rates of interest?

MR. J. LOWTHER: With regard to taking measures at once for the extension of out-door relief, many weeks, and even I may say months since, the Government communicated with the Local Government Board, and instructed them that where it was found absolutely necessary out-door relief should be given in food or fuel to able-bodied persons. With regard to the provision that relief should not be given to able-bodied persons or others in the occupation of a quarter of an acre of land, we have ordered that such relief shall, when really necessary, be given, notwithstanding those provisions of the law. [MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: When?] I cannot now go into details which may require a long explanation; but I occupy the position of President of the Irish Local Government Board. I verbally gave the instructions to which I have referred to the Vice President, and I am responsible for those instructions. The instructions were that when it was found necessary to avert famine, and subject to the special approval of the Local Government Board, out-door relief should be given, but that no relief of this exceptional kind should be given except where it was specially approved by the Local Government Board.

MR. CHARLEY hoped that the measures of the Government would not be confined to loans, but that they would resort to the policy of 1848, and undertake public works in Ireland. How was it possible for a landlord with heavy mortgages on his property to pay the interest on the loan, and also the interest on the mortgages, the heavy poor rates, tithe-rent charge, and other charges, while he had no rent paid by his tenants? It might be a question also whether the mortgagees would consent to his obtaining a loan from the Government, as it would take priority of the mortgagees.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I will not enter into all the questions now raised, because that would rather be travelling beyond what I understood to be our course. In answer, however, to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Pontefract (Mr. Childers), I may say that the course of proceeding is explained in the 17th clause of the Bill. That throws the duty of selecting the works upon which money is to be advanced upon the Commissioners of Public Works, who are now intrusted with that duty, and the money will be distributed by them on their responsibility. The Church Temporalities Commissioners will advance, on the direction of the Treasury, such sums out of this sum of £500,000 as will be necessary to supply the Commissioners of Works with the necessary funds. The hon. Member for Reading (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) asks what will be the rate of interest charged by the National Debt Commissioners to the Church Temporalities Commissioners. I imagine it will be at the rate of 3¾ per cent, which was the rate at which it was lent last time, and the rate at which it will be lent to the public will be 1 per cent. Therefore, to that extent, the Church Fund will bear the loss.

MAJOR NOLAN hoped that public works in the true sense, such large works as railroads and tramways, would be included in the scheme of the Government. With regard to the question of the distribution of this money, he thought it would be much better that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should give way, and put it on the Union and not on the populous districts which would require the greatest amount of assistance. Otherwise they might have the question raised of Union rating. There were many good points in the Bill, such, for instance, as that the county cess should be paid by the landlord, which he regarded as a very fair provision.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY observed, that some changes might advantageously be made in the administration of in-door poor relief. At present, if a father was unable to support his wife or any of his children, and wanted to obtain in-door relief for any of them, he and his wife must also go into the house. In ordinary times, and under ordinary circumstances, that was a very good provision, because it threw on the parent the responsibility of providing for his family. Now, however, though a father might be utterly unable to maintain all his family, if he could send some of them into the workhouse and remain himself outside honestly doing his best to support the rest, he would be able to retain his work, and in time to take them out again. That was a very important means of preventing an increase in pauperism, and he hoped it would receive the consideration of the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. JOHN GEORGE MacCARTHY also hoped that that provision would be introduced.

Major O'GORMAN wished to thank the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the admirable Bill he had just brought forward. He was very much pleased to learn that great care was to be taken that the labour of the people should not be altogether devoted to remunerative public works to the exclusion of farming operations. He would ask whether the right hon. Gentleman would take into his consideration the desirability of supplying the farmers in the distressed districts with seed potatoes? They would require about 500,000 barrels of the best Scotch Champion potatoes, the present price of which, roughly speaking, was about £1 a barrel. He did not, of course, wish the Government to give this seed for nothing. It must be poor land in Ireland that would not return at least 40 barrels to the acre. When he was a boy they used to get 100 barrels an acre with the greatest possible ease, but not so now. One barrel would be sufficient for seed for a quarter of an acre. That would raise 10 barrels, and it surely would not be unjust to ask the cultivator from his next year's crop to return to the Government one barrel as principal and another barrel as interest. If that were done, the Government would have interest at 100 per cent on their loan. He had lain awake for nights thinking of this proposal; and as it would involve no loss to the Treasury, and could be easily carried out, he did very heartily hope and trust that the Government would accede to his suggestion. The right hon. Gentleman had brought in his Bill in the most handsome manner; and he hoped, therefore, he would consent to give these poor people relief in the form recommended, and which they wanted most. If it were not given, the simple result would be that next year they would have another famine equal to the one in whose awful presence they at present stood. He mentioned Scotch seed, because it was necessary to change the seed occasionally, or the crop would fail.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill to render valid certain proceedings taken for the Relief of Distress in Ireland, and to make further provision for such relief; and for other purposes, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. James Lowther, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, and Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 1.]

CRIMINAL CODE BILL.

LEAVE. FIRST READING.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir John Holker), in asking for leave to introduce this Bill, said, he had on previous occasions explained, at considerable length, the scope and object of this measure; and, therefore, he did not now propose to detain the House with any explanations of it. If the House would allow it to be introduced and subsequently to be read a second time, it was the intention of the Government to refer it to a Committee.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill to establish a Code of Offences for England and Ireland, and to prescribe the procedure by indictment for the punishment of offenders, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Attorney General, Mr. Solicitor General, and Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 2.]

BANKRUPTCY LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

LEAVE. FIRST READING.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir JOHN HOLKER) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Law of Bankruptcy, and for other purposes.

MR. NORWOOD asked if there was any intention to refer the Bill to the Committee of last Session?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir JOHN HOLKER) replied, that he had heard that question put before; but he was unable to find that any pledge such as that suggested was given last Session. Of course, if it was the course promised it would be taken; but he would be much obliged to his hon. Friend if he would not ask for a distinct pledge to that effect that night. The Bill was simply a consolidation Bill, and was, therefore, much shorter than the Bill of last year. He therefore hoped that it would be dealt with by the House without the delay which would arise from a reference to a Select Committee.

MR. WHITWELL could assure the hon. and learned Gentleman (the Attorney General) that the pledge of which he had spoken was given; and, therefore, he hoped that the Bill would be introduced as soon as possible, in order that the measure might go to a Select Committee and be carried that Session.

MR. MUNDELLA said, that all the commercial Members of the House were extremely anxious to see the Bill, and to assist in rendering it effectual. Speaking for himself, he could assure the Government that he regarded this as no Party question. He was sure the hon. and learned Gentleman would do good service if he would introduce this Bill, and refer it as soon as possible to a Select Committee. That would facilitate its progress through the House, and enable him much sooner to come to an accord with the commercial men of the country.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill to amend the Law of Bankruptcy; and for other purposes relating thereto, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. ATTORNEY GENERAL and Mr. SOLICITOR GENERAL.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 3.]

STANDING ORDERS.

Select Committee on Standing Orders *nominated:*—Mr. MOWBRAY, Mr. BRUEN, Sir EDWARD COLEBROOKE, Mr. CUBITT, Mr. FLOYER, Mr. THOMSON HANKEY, Sir GRAHAM MONTGOMERY, The O'CONOR DON, Mr. RODWELL, Lord ARTHUR RUSSELL, and Mr. WHITBREAD.

SELECTION.

Committee of Selection *nominated:* — Mr. FLOYER, Mr. THOMSON HANKEY, Sir GRAHAM MONTGOMERY, The O'CONOR DON, Mr. WHITBREAD, and the Chairman of the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

COLONIAL CHARTERED BANKING COMPANIES BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That the Chairman be directed to move the House, that leave be given to bring in a Bill to make further provision with respect to certain Chartered Banking (Colonial) Companies; and for other purposes.

Resolution *reported:* — Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON and Mr. CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 4.]

ARTIZANS' AND LABOURERS' DWELLINGS IMPROVEMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT (1875) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of The LORD ADVOCATE, Bill to amend "The Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement (Scotland) Act, 1875," *ordered* to be brought in by The Lord ADVOCATE and Sir MATTHEW RIDLEY.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 5.]

COUNTY COURTS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. NORWOOD, Bill to extend the Jurisdiction of the County Courts, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. NORWOOD, Mr. ROWLEY HILL, Mr. WATKIN WILLIAMS, and Sir EARDLEY WILMOT.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 6.]

LUNACY LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. DILLWYN, Bill to amend the Laws relating to Lunatics, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. DILLWYN, Sir GEORGE BALFOUR, and Mr. HERSCHELL.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 7.]

ULSTER TENANT RIGHT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. MACARTNEY, Bill for the better securing of the Tenant Right Custom in the province of Ulster, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. MACARTNEY and Mr. CHARLES LEWIS.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 8.]

VACCINATION BILL.

On Motion of Dr. Cameron, Bill to encourage Vaccination by providing facilities for the optional use of Animal Vaccine, *ordered* to be brought in by Dr. Cameron, Earl Percy, Mr. Lyon Playfair, Dr. Lush, and Dr. Ward.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 9.]

MEDICAL ACT (1858) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Dr. Lush, Bill to amend "The Medical Act, 1858," *ordered* to be brought in by Dr. Lush, Sir Trevor Lawrence, and Sir Joseph M'Kenna.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 10.]

LAW OF EJECTMENT SUSPENSION (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Sullivan, Bill for the better protection of life and property by temporarily suspending the powers of Ejectment for non-payment of Rent for agricultural holdings in certain districts in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Kirk, Mr. O'Sullivan, and Mr. O'Shaughnessy.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 11.]

SLIGO BOROUGH (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. O'Conor, Bill to constitute the Borough of Sligo a Parliamentary Borough, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. O'Conor, Mr. Ashley, and Mr. Errington.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 12.]

INTESTATES REAL ESTATE BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Potter, Bill for the better settling the Real Estates of Intestates, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Potter, Mr. Leatham, Mr. Price, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Mr. Anderson, and Mr. Hopwood.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 13.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS (COMMISSION) BILL.

On Motion of Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, Bill to appoint a Commission for the alteration of the areas of Local Government in certain cases, and for the re-arrangement of the boundaries thereof, *ordered* to be brought in by Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, Mr. Pell, Mr. Clare Read, and Mr. Backhouse.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 14.]

RATING OF TOWNS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. O'Shaughnessy, Bill to amend the Law as to the Rating of Towns in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr O'Shaughnessy and Sir Joseph M'Kenna.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 15.]

PUBLIC HEALTH (IRELAND) ACT (1878) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Redmond, Bill to amend "The Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878," *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Redmond, Mr. O'Clery, and Mr. Fay.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 16.]

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) (WARNINGS TO REMOVE) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Alexander Gordon, Bill to extend the time of warning to remove in the case of Agricultural Holdings in Scotland, *ordered* to be brought in by Sir Alexander Gordon, Mr. M'Lagan, and Mr. James Barclay.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 17.]

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY ACTS 1870 AND 1874 AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Hibbert, Bill to amend the Married Women's Property Acts 1870 and 1874, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Hibbert, Mr. Goldney, and Mr. Osborne Morgan.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 18.]

POLITICAL PRISONERS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. O'Connor Power, Bill to make better provision for the treatment of persons imprisoned under the Treason Felony Acts, and on account of offences of a Political character, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. O'Connor Power, Sir Charles W. Dilke, Mr. Joseph Cowen, and Sir Wilfrid Lawson.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 19.]

POOR LAW GUARDIANS (ELECTION BY BALLOT) (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Errington, Bill to provide for the Election of Poor Law Guardians in Ireland by Ballot, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Errington, Mr. Gray, and Mr. O'Conor.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 20.]

POOR LAW GUARDIANS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Fay, Bill to add to the existing number of ex-officio Guardians of Poor Law Unions in Ireland certain clergymen resident in each union, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Fay, Mr. P. J. Smyth, Mr. Patrick Martin, Mr. Errington, and Mr. Redmond.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 21.]

EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY FOR INJURIES TO SERVANTS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Macdonald, Bill to amend the Law as to Employers' Liability for Injuries to their Servants, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Macdonald, Dr. Cameron, Mr. Burt, Mr. Meldon, and Mr. Earp.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 22.]

MARRIAGE LAWS AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Blennerhassett, Bill to alter and amend the Marriage Laws, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Blennerhassett, Mr. Morley, Mr. Monk, Mr. Mundella, and Mr. Cogan.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 23.]

WASTE LANDS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. JOHN GEORGE MACCARTHY, Bill to promote arterial drainage, reclamation of waste lands, and the gradual formation of a class of peasant proprietors in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. JOHN GEORGE MACCARTHY, Mr. SHAW, and Sir EARDLEY WILMOT.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 24.]

VOLUNTEER CORPS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. O'CLERY, Bill to establish Volunteer Corps in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. O'CLERY, Lord Francis CONYNGHAM, Major NOLAN, Major O'BEIRNE, Colonel KING-HARMAN, Colonel COLTHURST, Major O'GORMAN, and Colonel The O'GORMAN MAHON.

Bill *presented*, and read the first iime. [Bill 25.]

PARTNERSHIPS BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That the Chairman be directed to move the House, that leave be given to bring in a Bill to consolidate and amend the Law of Partnerships.

Resolution *reported:* — Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. SAMPSON LLOYD, Mr. HERSCHELL, Mr. GREGORY, and Mr. WHITWELL.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 26.]

MERCHANT SHIPPING (GRAIN CARGOES) BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That the Chairman be directed to move the House, that leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1876, so far as the same relate to the stowage of Cargoes of Grain.

Resolution *reported:* — Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. PLIMSOLL, Mr. JOSEPH COWEN, Mr. ANDERSON, and Mr. GORST.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 27.]

MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Major O'GORMAN, Bill for the assimilation of the Irish Municipal Franchise to that of England, *ordered* to be brought in by Major O'GORMAN, Sir JOSEPH M'KENNA, Mr. RICHARD POWER, and Mr. BLENNERHASSETT.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 28.]

EMPLOYERS AND WORKMEN ACT (1875) (EXTENSION TO SEAMEN) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. BURT, Bill to extend the provisions of "The Employers and Workmen Act, 1875," to Seamen whilst they are in British waters, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. BURT, Mr. JOSEPH COWEN, Mr. MUNDELLA, Mr. GOURLEY, and Mr. GORST.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 29.]

LEASES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. MARTEN, Bill to amend the Law relating to Leases, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. MARTEN, Sir HENRY JACKSON, Mr. GREGORY, and Mr. CHARLES LEWIS.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 30.]

LANDLORD AND TENANT (IRELAND) ACT (1870) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. DANIEL TAYLOR, Bill to amend "The Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Act, 1870," *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. DANIEL TAYLOR, Sir THOMAS M'CLURE, Mr. BENJAMIN WHITWORTH, and Mr. LEA.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 31.]

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY (WALES) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. ROBERTS, Bill to prohibit the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday in Wales, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. RICHARD, Mr. HUSSEY VIVIAN, Mr. HOLLAND, and Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 32.]

LOCAL INQUIRIES (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. P. J. SMYTH, Bill to provide for the establishment of a Tribunal for the conduct of local inquiries relating to Private Bills in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. P. J. SMYTH, Colonel KING-HARMAN, Mr. JOSEPH COWEN, Sir HARCOURT JOHNSTONE, Dr. CAMERON, and Sir JOSEPH M'KENNA.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 33.]

HYPOTHEC ABOLITION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. AGNEW, Bill to abolish the Landlord's right of Hypothec for rent of land in Scotland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. AGNEW, Mr. BAILLIE HAMILTON, and Sir GEORGE DOUGLAS.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 34.]

ECCLESIASTICAL DILAPIDATIONS ACT (1871) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON, Bill to amend "The Ecclesiastical Dilapidations Act, 1871," as to insurance of buildings, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON, Mr. WHITWELL, Mr. GOLDNEY, and Mr. HARDCASTLE.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 35.]

SEA FISHERIES (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Dr. WARD, Bill to amend the Law relating to Sea Fisheries in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Dr. WARD, Mr. COLLINS, Sir JOSEPH M'KENNA, and Mr. REDMOND.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 36.]

MEDICAL ACT (1858) AMENDMENT (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Arthur Mills, Bill to amend "The Medical Act, 1858," *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Arthur Mills, Mr. Childers, and Mr. Goldney.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 37.]

TITHE COMMUTATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Goldney, Bill to amend and further extend the Acts for the Commutation of Tithes in England and Wales, and to afford additional powers for the sale and redemption of Tithe Rent charge, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Goldney and Mr. Gregory.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 38.]

HOURS OF POLLING (BOROUGHS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Chamberlain, Bill to extend the Hours of Polling at Elections in Boroughs other than Metropolitan, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Chamberlain, Sir Charles W. Dilke, Mr. Mundella, Dr. Cameron, Major Nolan, and Mr. Henry Samuelson.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 39.]

ENTAIL AND SETTLEMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Bill to limit the power of entailing and settling land and other property, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Mr. Osborne Morgan, Mr. Wentworth Beaumont, Mr. Chamberlain, and Mr. Herschell.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 40.]

BLIND AND DEAF-MUTE CHILDREN BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Wheelhouse, Bill for the better Education of Blind and Deaf-Mute Children, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Wheelhouse, Mr. Montague Scott, and Mr. Benjamin Williams.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 41.]

SPIRITS IN BOND BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That the Chairman be directed to move the House, that leave be given to bring in a Bill for the improvement of the quality of Spirits before being allowed out of Bond for consumption.

Resolution *reported*: — Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. O'Sullivan, Major Nolan, Captain Pim, Mr. Richard Power, Mr. Yeaman, and Major O'Beirne.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 42.]

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS (PROPERTY QUALIFICATION ABOLITION) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Mundella, Bill to abolish the Property Qualification for members of Municipal Corporations and Local Governing Bodies, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Mundella, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Burt, and Mr. Sullivan.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 43.]

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Anderson, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Property of Married Women in Scotland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Anderson, Sir Robert Anstruther, Mr. Orr Ewing, Mr. M'Laren, and Mr. Lyon Playfair.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 44.]

LANDED PROPRIETORS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. P. J. Smyth, Bill to facilitate the creation of a class of small landed proprietors in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. P. J. Smyth, Mr. Martin, Mr. Fay, and The O'Donoghue.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 45.]

BANKRUPTCY ACT (1869) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Sampson Lloyd, Bill to amend "The Bankruptcy Act, 1869," *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Sampson Lloyd, Mr. Norwood, Mr. Whitwell, and Mr. Ripley.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 46.]

CRIMINAL CODE (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Wheelhouse, Bill to establish a Criminal Code, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Wheelhouse, Mr. Serjeant Spinks, and Captain Pim.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 47.]

SEED POTATOES (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Major Nolan, Bill for enabling Guardians of the Poor to borrow money for the purpose of procuring Seed Potatoes for tenants in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Major Nolan, Mr. George Browne, and Mr. P. J. Smyth.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 48.]

EXCISABLE LIQUORS TRAFFIC (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That the Chairman be directed to move the House, that leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Law relating to the traffic in excisable liquors in passenger vessels plying between Scottish ports.

Resolution *reported*: — Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Dr. Cameron, Lord Colin Campbell, Mr. Dalrymple, Mr. James Stewart, Mr. Orr Ewing, Mr. Grant, and Mr. Yeaman.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 49.]

JUDICIAL FACTORS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Ramsay, Bill to provide for the appointment of Judicial Factors by Sheriff Courts, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Baxter, Sir Graham Montgomery, and Mr. Dalrymple.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 50.]

ANCIENT MONUMENTS BILL.

On Motion of Sir JOHN LUBBOCK, Bill to provide for the better protection of Ancient Monuments, *ordered* to be brought in by Sir JOHN LUBBOCK, Mr. BERESFORD HOPE, Mr. MORGAN, and Sir RICHARD WALLACE.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 51.]

COMPANIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Acts *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That the Chairman be directed to move the House, that leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Companies Acts of 1862, 1867, and 1877.

Resolution *reported*: — Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Sir JOHN LUBBOCK, Mr. COOPE, Mr. HERSCHELL, and Sir CHARLES MILLS.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 52.]

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

On Motion of Mr. STEVENSON, Bill to prohibit the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. STEVENSON, Mr. BIRLEY, Mr. CHARLES WILSON, Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN, Mr. WILLIAM M'ARTHUR, and Mr. JAMES.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 53.]

REGISTRATION OF VOTERS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. MELDON, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Registration of Voters in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. MELDON, Mr. SHAW, and Mr. HENRY.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 54.]

COUNTY INFIRMARIES (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. MELDON, Bill to amend the Law relating to County Infirmaries in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. MELDON, Mr. DEASE, Mr. ERRINGTON, and Mr. JOHN GEORGE MAC CARTHY.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 55.]

BIRTHS AND DEATHS REGISTRATION (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. MELDON, Bill to alter the Law relating to the Registration of Births and Deaths in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. MELDON, Mr. ERRINGTON, and Major NOLAN.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 56.]

EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY (RAILWAY SERVANTS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. SULLIVAN, Bill to amend the Laws relating to the liability of employers for injury to workmen as regards Railway Servants, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. BRASSEY, Mr. MORLEY, and Mr. BASS.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 57.]

PERPETUITY LEASES (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. ERRINGTON, Bill to enable limited owners of property in Ireland to make perpetuity leases, and to convey settled property under certain circumstances, with due protection to the interests of the tenant in tail, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. ERRINGTON, Colonel COLTHURST, and Mr. FAY.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 58.]

House adjourned at half after Two o'clock till Monday next.

* * *

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 9th February, 1880.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILL — *First Reading*— Employers' Liability (4).

ROLL OF THE LORDS.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had prepared and laid it on the Table: The same was ordered to be *printed*. (No. 3.)

THE EMPRESS OF INDIA.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: My Lords, I wish to ask the indulgence of the House for a few moments, in order that I may give to your Lordships an explanation of a matter personal to myself. Some of your Lordships may be aware that, at a meeting held a few weeks ago in Midlothian, the noble Lord who a short time ago held the office of Under Secretary of State for India (Lord George Hamilton) stated that, during the period that I occupied the position of Secretary of State for India, I addressed a telegram to the Indian Government, which was to be communicated to the late Ameer of Afghanistan, Shere Ali, and in which I styled Her Majesty the Queen "Empress of India." Now, my Lords, I cannot say that I have that supreme contempt which the noble Earl at the head of the Government seems to entertain for what are called "extra-Parliamentary utterances;" and least of all could I have it for the words of one who always speaks with great spirit, and who, I hope, has a distinguished future before him. It so happened, my Lords, that I did not see the speech of the noble Lord; and I did not even know that he had made the statement to which I refer until the day before the meeting of Parliament, when I arrived in town. When I did hear of it I at once wrote to the noble Viscount the Secretary of State for India (Viscount Cranbrook) asking him to be good enough to allow me to see the telegram, and the noble Viscount was so kind as to say that the document would be open for my inspection whenever I called at the India Office. That was on Friday evening. In the Parliamentary Intelligence of *The Times* I found on Saturday morning this passage—

> "THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: 'THE EMPRESS OF INDIA.'
>
> "Sir H. DRUMMOND WOLFF asked the Under Secretary of State for India whether there exists in the archives of the India Office a telegraphic despatch transmitted to India in 1869, on the responsibility of the Secretary of State, the Duke of Argyll, for communication to the Ameer of Cabul, in which, among other titles, Her Majesty the Queen is designated as Empress of India; and if so, whether the Government are prepared to lay a copy of such despatch upon the table.
>
> "Mr. E. STANHOPE.—The circumstances in which this telegram was sent were these: After the conclusion of the conference with Lord Mayo in 1869, it was decided to send a friendly message to the Ameer Shere Ali in the name of her Majesty. A telegram was accordingly prepared by the political department at the India Office, and submitted to the Secretary of State for India. The telegram was headed 'From the Queen of England,' which the Duke of Argyll altered—apparently in his own handwriting—to 'the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India' (loud and continued cheering from the Ministerial benches), and in that form it was sent (renewed cheering). There can be no objection to producing the telegram, if it is thought worth while to do so. (Cheers).
>
> "Sir H. DRUMMOND WOLFF expressed a wish that the telegram should be presented to the House in *fac simile.* (Laughter.)"

Whether the hon. Gentleman proposes that the cost of producing the *fac simile* should be borne by the Revenues of India or not, I cannot say. I went to the India Office this morning, when the noble Viscount showed me the telegram. Beyond doubt or question the telegram was drawn up by my late distinguished friend Sir John Kaye; but the title of Her Majesty was partly altered, and in my own handwriting the words "Empress of India" were inserted. Therefore, Lord George Hamilton was perfectly justified in the statement which he made. At the same time, I have not the slightest recollection of the circumstance. It has entirely passed from my memory. Well, my Lords, shortly after my leaving the India Office I met a Conservative friend, who approached me with a cheerful, if not triumphant, countenance. I do not know whether he had joined in the vociferous cheering with which the statement in the House of Commons had been received. He said to me—"Is this story true about the telegram? Is it really true, after all the violent opposition which you brought to bear on us for bringing in the Bill as to conferring the title of 'Empress of India?'—is it true that before this you had yourself addressed a telegram to the Ameer Shere Ali, in which you styled the Queen 'Empress of India'?" Well, my hon. Friend was in such very high spirits that I was very unwilling to interfere with his pleasure. He added—"What explanation have you to give?" I said —"It is an awkward circumstance; but I shall wait till Monday and give my explanation in the House of Lords. But are you quite sure that I made any violent attack on the Government in respect of the Bill conferring that title?" He said—"Yes." I said—"Who told you so?" He replied—"Oh, everybody told me so, that you blamed the Government very much for doing what you did yourself. One hears it in all the Clubs and everywhere." "You had better go to *Hansard* and read what I did say," observed I to my friend; and I am afraid that my hon. Friend went away "a sadder if not a wiser man." Now, my Lords, the fact is, I took no part in the discussion on the Bill for conferring upon Her Majesty the title of Empress of India. I did not say one word in that discussion against giving Her Majesty that title. I came down to the House to hear the debate, and I thought there was some exaggerated feeling on both sides of the House. I thought, on the one hand, it was not very wise to raise the question, and, on the other hand, I could not attach to it that importance which my noble Friends behind me did. I walked out of the House, and did not vote; and I never have said, in public or in private, one single word against the Bill. There is an extraordinary misunderstanding flying about in reference to that telegram, and also in connection with another document, a letter. The noble Duke who brought in the Bill (the Duke of Richmond and Gordon) quoted a letter from the late Viceroy (the Earl of Northbrook), and that statement was to the effect that a letter was written by him to Atalik Ghazee, Yarkand, in which the Queen was called "Empress of Hindostan." In both these cases the object was to give an English word that could be translated into Persian as showing the supreme governor, and it had nothing to do with giving any increased title; the object was, as I said, to get an English word that in Persian would convey the impression of one of the supreme Sovereigns of the world. The phrase which my noble Friend (the Earl of Northbrook) employed for this purpose was "Empress of Hindostan." Well, the Government brought in a Bill to confer the title; and in the course of the discussion it was said that it had been the custom, more or less, to call the Queen "Empress of Hindostan," and no doubt it was more or less, though I doubted whether it was wise to give a new title, and, in lieu of that which previously constituted mere description, to confer a formal English title. There is a great difference between the two things. I do not know whether your Lordships have remarked in the Papers what was the reception Shere Ali gave to the Act conferring the title. Writing to the Viceroy on the 22nd of May, 1876, he says—

> "Kind Friend, by hearing the good news of the Shahinshahi (office of Shahinshah) of Her Majesty the Great Queen, in view of the friendship and union of the two Exalted Governments, much joy and pleasure and happiness were produced in the penetrating heart. Consequently the firm hope is this, that from the most excellent title of Shahinshah of Her Majesty the Great Queen repose and security in all that belongs to the affairs of the servants of God . . . . more than in former times, will be experienced in reality."—[*Afghanistan*, No. 1, 1878, p. 175.]

I am bound to say that if this is the foundation of the new Imperial policy in India I rather owe an apology to my noble Friends behind me for not having read the proposition contained in the Bill by the light of subsequent events; and if I have any expression of repentance to make it is not that I refrained from voting on the measure, but that I did not join them in opposing it. In conclusion, I wish to give Notice that the Motion that I propose to move on the 20th instant will be for an Address for Copy of any Correspondence found at Cabul between the late Ameer Shere Ali Khan and the Russian Authorities in Turkestan or St. Petersburg; and, if Her Majesty's Government should say, as was said in "another place," in spite of the information which had reached the public through the Press in regard to the nature of this Correspondence, that they cannot, in the interest of the Public Service, produce it, I shall be obliged to state why I think that it is in the interest of the public they should know what was the nature of those Papers.

BASUTOLAND.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether it was intended to disarm the natives in Basutoland without distinction; and whether the measure was enforced under the authority of an Act of the Cape Parliament, or by the authority of the Governor only? The noble Earl said, he believed that in South Africa there was no tribe better affected towards this country than that of the Basutos. The proposition of indiscriminate disarmament was causing considerable dissatisfaction and even disaffection among them, and that was a result greatly to be deplored. He did not find fault with the general policy of disarmament in South Africa; on the contrary, he was inclined to think that if such a policy was gradually and cautiously carried into effect it would be productive of excellent results; but he was of opinion that indiscriminate disarmament of all the Natives, whether loyal or disloyal, would create disorder and disaffection. He had, therefore, placed his Question on the Paper, and was anxious to know by what authority disarmament was to be carried out; because if it were on the authority of the Governor alone, he should not contemplate good results from the measure.

EARL CADOGAN, in reply, said, the noble Earl would recollect that under his (the Earl of Kimberley's) auspices in

1871 Basutoland was annexed to Cape Colony, and that the responsibility for the preservation of the peace in that country rested entirely with the Government of the Cape. The latest intelligence which the Colonial Office had received was contained in a Minute dated December 16, 1879, in which the Cape Government announced their determination to proclaim in Basutoland the Peace Preservation Act of 1878. That Act would be found in the Papers as Act 13 of 1878. It was entitled "Peace Preservation Act of 1878," and it empowered the Governor to proclaim districts as areas within which no person should have or carry arms or ammunition without a licence, unless such person were a magistrate, justice of the peace, or field cornet, or were serving in Her Majesty's Forces, or were enrolled in any colonial, burgher, or volunteer force. Compulsory disarmament could only be carried out under that Act, and not by authority of the Governor only. He might be permitted to call attention to a Cape despatch dated December 16, 1879. It was in these terms—

"Colonial Secretary's Office, Cape Town,
"Cape of Good Hope, December 16, 1879.

"Ministers beg to forward to his Excellency the Governor for transmission to the Secretary of State the official report of the proceedings at the Pitso, held at Masera, British Basutoland, on the 16th and 17th of October last, which contains a full explanation of their policy with respect to disarmament. The rebellion in Basutoland having terminated, and peace being apparently established throughout the colony and its dependencies, the Peace Preservation Act will shortly be proclaimed in Basutoland, and some other parts of the eastern districts of the colony to which the Act has not yet been applied. Intelligence has within the last few days been received from the Chief Officer of the Government in Basutoland that many head men have informed him that they are quite ready to surrender their arms when called upon to do so. The precautions that have been used in the past will be exercised in the future, and Ministers have every expectation that their continued efforts to insure permanent peace in this part of Her Majesty's dominions will be attended with success.

"J. Gordon Sprigg."

That was received on the 7th of January. He might state, in passing, that it would be embodied in Papers that would be presented to their Lordships in the course of this week or next. A telegram, which some of their Lordships might have seen, appeared in *The Times* of to-day, stating that—

"The Cape Government, according to the request of Letsea, the Basuto chief, has granted a delay for the surrender of arms by the Basutos, pending the result of the Petition which the chief has addressed to the Cape Parliament."

He was not able to confirm the statement, as they had heard nothing of it officially; but, from all they had heard, he was in a position to state that disarmament, when it was carried out, and if it was carried out, would be done with due consideration for the feelings of the inhabitants, and would, he hoped, tend to their welfare and the tranquillity of the Colony.

EMPLOYERS LIABILITY BILL.

BILL PRESENTED. FIRST READING.

The LORD CHANCELLOR, in moving for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the law relating to the liability of employers for injuries sustained by their servants, said: This is a subject that has attracted of late years very considerable attention; and therefore I would ask permission to say a very few words as to the nature of the measure, and the course which the Government intend to take with regard to it. Your Lordships have, no doubt, observed that according to the existing law an employer of labour, if his servant sustains injury in the course of his employment by reason of the personal negligence of the employer, is liable to pay compensation. But, on the other hand, he is not liable if the injury is sustained in consequence of the negligence of another servant, the two being engaged in a common employment. That state of the law has been very much complained of on the part of those who are affected by it, and two alternative amendments of the law have been proposed. Some persons have proposed that the law should be altered in this way—that the employer of labour should be liable to all those in his employment for the negligence of his servants, just in the same way as he is liable to the outside public —that is to say, that an employer of labour should be a kind of insurer in reference to any accident sustained by his workmen. That is the change of the law that is proposed in the interests of workmen. There is another proposed amendment of the law, which does not go to the same extent. An employer is now liable for personal negligence, and it has been proposed that where an employer does not himself act, but delegates the functions of authority, of supervision, and of command to third persons who take his place, he should be liable for the negligence of those to whom he so delegates his authority. The subject was considered very carefully by two tribunals, whose opinions entitle them to the greatest weight. In 1877 there was a Royal Commission to inquire into the subject of Railway Accidents, and in their Report they made this recommendation—

> "We recommend that in any action against a railway company for compensation for the death or injury of a servant through the defendants' negligence, the officials whom the company intrusts with executive authority shall no longer be deemed to be merely the fellow-servants of their subordinates; or, in other words, that where a railway servant can establish against any official of the company empowered to direct the act or control the matter complained of such proof of negligence as would make him liable if he were himself the master, his negligence shall be deemed to be negligence on the part of the company. We do not intend, moreover, that this should apply only where the injured servant is the subordinate of the official in default and in the same department of work, but that the company should in every case be liable to its servants for the negligence of those to whom it delegates its authority as master."

That is the recommendation of the Commissioners; but it would be very difficult to put into the language of a Bill the kind of servants that was referred to in general terms. In the same year there was a Select Committee in the other House that considered the subject; and, in the first place, I should state to your Lordships the terms of the Reference to that Select Committee. They were—

> "Appointed to inquire whether it may be expedient to render masters liable for injuries occasioned to their servants by the negligent acts of certificated managers of collieries, managers, foremen, and others to whom the general control and superintendence of workshops and works is committed, and whether the term 'common employment' could be defined by legislative enactment more clearly than it is by the law as it at present stands."

That was in the Reference to the Committee, and they made their Report almost unanimously that—

> "There can be no doubt that the effect of abolishing the defence of 'common employment' (as has been actually proposed in a Bill submitted to the House) would be a serious disturbance in the industrial arrangements of the country. Sooner or later the position of master and workman would find its level by a re-adjustment of the rate of wages, but in the meantime great alarm would be occasioned, and the investment of capital in industrial undertakings would be discouraged. . . . Your Committee, therefore, are of opinion that no case is made out for any alteration in the law relating to the liability of employers to their workmen for injury in the course of their employment, except in the matters to which they now proceed to refer. . . . The development of modern industry has created large numbers of employing bodies, such as corporations and public companies, to whom it is not possible to bring home personal default; and there are other cases in which masters leave the whole conduct of their business to agents and managers, themselves taking no personal part whatever either in the supply of materials or in the choice of subordinate servants. Your Committee are of opinion that in cases such as these—that is, where the actual employers cannot personally discharge the duties of masters, or where they deliberately abdicate their functions and delegate them to agents, the acts or defaults of the agents who thus discharge the duties and fulfil the functions of masters should be considered as the personal acts or defaults of the principals and employers, and should impose the same liability on such principals and employers as they would have been subject to had they been acting personally in the conduct of their business, notwithstanding that such agents are technically in the employment of the principals. The fact of such a delegation of authority would have to be established in each case, but this would not be a matter of difficulty."

Last Session the Government introduced a Bill into the other House of Parliament upon the subject, their object being to carry out, as far as they could, the general recommendations that had been made. Of course, it was a matter for much consideration in what words these recommendations should be expressed. Last Session we could not proceed with the Bill, and I propose now to lay it upon the Table, and to ask your Lordships to read it a first time. I will refer shortly to the general proposition which the Government would ask Parliament to lay down. It is that—

> "If any person in the service of any employer in any railway, mine, manufacture, or works, is injured or killed by the negligence of a servant in authority of such employer in the course of his employment as such 'servant in authority,' and under circumstances in which, but for the fact of both persons being in the service of the same employer, the person injured, or if he was killed his personal representative, would have a right of action against the employer, such right of action shall subsist notwithstanding the fact of the common employment."

Then comes the question, what is a servant in authority, and that is a matter of immense difficulty. In the first section I propose to define that, in reference to railways, mines, manufactories, and works, and last year the definitions were subject to much criticism both on the part of the employer and the employed; and I am not surprised that there was criticism on both sides. But the question is, what is to be the best solution of a question which gave rise to criticism from two quarters of the kind to which I have referred? I will not read these definitions now; but I may say that the course which the Government desire to take is this—We do not anticipate that there will be any serious contest upon the general provision laid down in the second section of the Bill; and if your Lordships should assent to the second reading, we think that in no way can the question of the definitions of "servants in authority" be better considered than before a Select Committee of the House, where those interested on one side and on the other can be heard, whose evidence can be heard, and whose objections can be carefully and, I may say, judicially considered by those who compose the Committee. I would, therefore, ask your Lordships to let us now read the Bill a first time, and I may say it has only two sections.

Bill to amend the law relating to the liability of employers for injuries sustained by their servants — *Presented* (The LORD CHANCELLOR.)

EARL GRANVILLE agreed with the noble and learned Earl that there was a great variety of opinion on the subject. He felt greatly obliged to the Government for bringing it in at such an early period of the Session, and for stating the object of the measure; but, at the same time, he thought that Notice ought to have been given, because he knew that there were several noble Lords who were interested in the subject who would have been glad to have been present to hear the noble and learned Earl's interesting and lucid statement. He thought it was a wise course to refer the Bill to a Select Committee.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 1^{a}; to be *printed;* and to be read 2^{a} on *Thursday next.* (No. 4.)

House adjourned at a quarter before
Six o'clock, till To-morrow,
half past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 9*th February*, 1880.

MINUTES.]—SELECT COMMITTEE—Commons, *appointed;* Public Petitions, *appointed* and *nominated.*

PUBLIC BILLS — *Resolution in Committee — Ordered—First Reading*—Beer Dealers' Retail Licences * [65].

Ordered—First Reading—Penal Clauses Abolition * [59]; Strensall Common * [60]; Commons Act (1876) Amendment * [61]; Post Office (Money Orders) * [62]; Artizans' Dwellings Act (1868) Amendment Act (1879) Amendment * [63]; Elective County Boards (Ireland) * [64].

Second Reading — Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement (Scotland) Act (1875) Amendment * [5]; Ancient Monuments [51].

QUESTIONS.

AFGHANISTAN — THE WAR — SIR FREDERICK ROBERTS AND THE AMEER.

MR. ONSLOW asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether Her Majesty's Government are in possession of any documents which directly or indirectly corroborate the statement conveyed in a conversation of the 22nd of October, 1879, between Sir Frederick Roberts and Yakoob Khan, in which the latter asserted that his father, Shere Ali, being dissatisfied with the result of the visit of Nur Mahomed Shah to Lord Northbrook in 1873, "began to turn his attention to the thoughts of a Russian alliance;" and, if so, whether Her Majesty's Government will now or at some future time lay those Papers on the Table of the House?

MR. E. STANHOPE: Sir, I am afraid I shall not be able to give a very satisfactory answer to the Question of my hon. Friend. He will, I am quite sure, see that if I were to give any information as to what this Correspondence does or does not contain it might as well be produced at once, and it has been decided not at present, at any rate, to produce it.

TREATY OF BERLIN—THE 23RD ARTICLE.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether any real and substantial steps have been taken to give effect to the provisions of the Twenty-third Article of the Treaty of Berlin for the establishment of Autonomies in the provinces of European Turkey?

MR. BOURKE: Sir, under the 23rd Article of the Treaty of Berlin an organic statute has been before the Council of State at Constantinople, and has been passed by it. According to the latest information that we have had on the subject, it is now before the different Commissions in the Provinces.

NAVY — ADMIRALTY FINANCIAL RETURN.

CAPTAIN PIM asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether he will lay upon the Table of the House, at least a fortnight before the Navy Estimates are moved, in the form of a Blue Book similar to that of Navy (Health) annually laid before the House, the Report of the operations of the Admiralty for the past financial year, together with propositions affecting expenditure for the ensuing year?

MR. W. H. SMITH, in reply, said, that the hon. and gallant Member was aware that the Blue Book relating to the health of the Navy related to matters which occurred in the previous and not in the current financial year, and, in fact, was a mere historical document. It would be inconvenient to carry out the hon. and gallant Gentleman's proposal.

ARMY—NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENTS IN THE FIELD.

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether the rules concerning newspaper correspondents with British armies in the field, published during the recess, are to be looked upon as being still in force?

COLONEL STANLEY: Sir, as a matter of fact, I believe that the rules to which the hon. Baronet refers are not in force; but it is not a fact which comes under my own personal observation. No rules have been published by my authority, and, as a matter of fact, neither in relation to the Afghan nor the Zulu War have any rules been laid down in reference to correspondents in the field.

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE: I should like to ask a further Question. I presume the right hon. and gallant Gentleman saw the rules prepared in India, and which were, I am informed, published by the Indian Government on the authority of the Secretary of State for War?

COLONEL STANLEY: Sir, if I am in Order in doing so, I should like to put the matter straight. The only Paper relating to the subject of which I am aware is a Memorandum drawn up by some officers after the Russo-Turkish War with regard to the duties of correspondents in the field. That Memorandum was drawn up for the purpose of discussion, and as a possible basis for proceeding hereafter. It was provisionally approved by the Commander-in-Chief and by myself to the extent that a certain number of copies should be printed. These copies were printed in the usual way by the Intelligence Department; but no rules have been issued on the matter. I understand that, application being made from India for copies of the Paper, as applications not unfrequently are for Papers on other subjects, a copy or copies of the Paper were forwarded to the authorities in India; but, as I have said, no rules have been issued by me, and, if I am in Order in saying so, I do not consider that any such rules could be issued except with very considerable modification.

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE gave Notice of his intention to put a Question on the subject to the Under Secretary of State for India.

TURKEY—THE SLAVE TRADE TREATY.

MR. ANDERSON asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If he will lay upon the Table a Copy of the Slave Trade Treaty signed by Turkey?

MR. BOURKE, in reply, said, that the Convention in question had been signed, but had not yet been ratified. As soon as the ratifications had been exchanged the document would be laid upon the Table.

Mr. W. E. FORSTER inquired when it might be expected that the ratifications would be exchanged?

Mr. BOURKE replied, that the necessary formalities would be completed very soon.

BALLOT ACT—LEGISLATION.

Mr. EDGE asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to introduce, during the present Session, any measure to continue the operation of the Ballot Act after December 31st, 1880?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: Sir, the course which Her Majesty's Government intend to take with regard to the Ballot Act is to propose to continue it for one year precisely as it stands, in order to give the new Parliament an opportunity of dealing with the subject. I may take this opportunity of stating, in answer to two Questions of which Notice has been given, that it is the intention of the Government shortly to introduce a Corrupt Practices Bill, and also shortly to introduce a Bill for the purpose of allocating the six vacant seats.

ARMY—THE 84th REGIMENT.

Mr. FRESHFIELD asked the Secretary of State for War, Why the 84th Regiment, leaving for Ireland this day, are to be moved, at great inconvenience and expense, to Sheerness instead of being embarked at Dover?

Colonel STANLEY: Sir, the troops have been sent to the place where the Admiralty sent a vessel to embark them. I understand that the Admiralty do not think it advisable for a large transport vessel to be alongside Dover Pier at this time of year.

THE LORDS COMMITTEE ON INTEMPERANCE—RECOMMENDATIONS.

Sir WILFRID LAWSON asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether Her Majesty's Government propose to take steps for carrying out any of the recommendations made by the Lords Select Committee on Intemperance?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: Sir, I do not think it is at all probable that it will be in the power of the Government this Session to take any steps for carrying out the recommendations made by the Lords Select Committee on Intemperance.

NAVY — COLONIAL ALLOWANCE TO NAVY AND ROYAL MARINE OFFICERS.

Sir JOHN HAY asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether the Colonial Allowance payable to officers of the Navy and Marines serving on shore in South Africa will soon be granted and paid?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: Sir, arrangements have been made for placing the officers of the Navy and Marines upon the same footing as the officers of the Army.

GREECE—THE PAPERS.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, When the Papers promised with reference to the Greek Question will be laid upon the Table of the House?

Mr. BOURKE, in reply, said, that the Papers promised with reference to the Greek Question were in print, and would be issued soon; but active negotiations were at present going on between the Powers. Therefore, it would be impossible to lay the Papers on the Table until the negotiations were terminated.

TURKEY—APPOINTMENT OF BRITISH CONSULS AND VICE CONSULS.

Mr. WHITWELL asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, At what places in Turkey in Asia British Consuls, Vice Consuls, or persons in any consulate capacity, have been appointed since the 1st of January 1879; and, if he will now state the names and rank of the persons so appointed, or lay a list of them upon the Table of the House?

Mr. BOURKE, in reply, said, Consular officers had been appointed, six in Anatolia, and others at Bagdad, Bussora, Erzeroum, Smyrna, and Rhodes. The names and particulars would be published as a Return if the hon. Gentleman would move for it.

TURKEY — CORRESPONDENCE AS TO AHMED TEWFIK AND DR. KOELLA.

MR. E. JENKINS asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, When he will lay upon the Table the Correspondence relating to the case of Ahmed Tewfik and Dr. Koella; and, whether he can now state what reparation has been given upon the ultimatum of Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople?

MR. BOURKE, in reply, said, the Correspondence on this subject was still going on; and, therefore, it was impossible to produce it.

MR. E. JENKINS said, he understood that the Correspondence was at the Foreign Office, and on the Motion for going into Committee of Supply he would call attention to the subject and move for Papers.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT — MR. HULLAH'S REPORT.

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE asked the Vice President of the Council, When Mr. Hullah's Report upon Musical Education Abroad will be published?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON, in reply, said, that the Report referred to would be published in the Annual Report of the Education Department; but there would be no objection to publishing it in a separate form.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [THIRD NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [5th February]—[See page 69.]

And which Amendment was,

At the end of the Question, to add the words, "We also think it right to represent to Your Majesty that Your Majesty's Government, although in possession of timely warning and information, have not taken adequate steps to meet promptly and efficaciously the severe distress now existing and increasing in Ireland; and we are of opinion that, in order to avert the horrors of famine from a wide area in that Country, the most vigorous measures are immediately necessary; and we are further of opinion that it is essential to the peace and prosperity of Ireland to legislate at once and in a comprehensive manner on these questions; and we humbly assure Your Majesty that we shall regard it as the duty of Parliament, on the earliest opportunity, to consider the necessary measures for the purpose, more urgently the tenure of land, the neglect of which by Parliament has been the true cause of constantly recurring dissatisfaction and distress in Ireland."—(*Mr. Redmond.*)

Question again proposed, "That those words be there added."

Debate *resumed.*

MR. MITCHELL HENRY said, that he had moved the adjournment of the debate on Friday, because it seemed to him to be impossible that a discussion of the question involved in the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) could be carried on in the absence of Papers which, it was said, justified the action of the Government. He had also in his mind a deep regret that the debate should have closed amidst the tumultuous oratory of that evening, because he knew well that, whatever might be said by others, who were not so well acquainted with the West of Ireland as he was, that famine did exist in that country, and that it would be worse before it became better. First of all, he wished to say a few words with regard to the circumstances in which they found themselves. Great fault had been found with the Irish Members because they moved the adjournment of the debate upon the Address on Thursday; and the leading organ of public opinion, as well as other newspapers, had criticized their conduct. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had also criticized their action; but he (Mr. Mitchell Henry) appealed to the fairness of the House whether they could have acted otherwise than they did? He would now explain the exact circumstances under which they found themselves placed. Before Parliament reassembled, the Irish Members met in Dublin, as it had been their custom to do ever since they had been organized as a Party; they discussed the question of what was to be done if the Government did not indicate in the Speech from the Throne that they contemplated taking sufficient measures to meet the condition of things which existed in Ireland. Of course, they came to the conclusion that they ought to move an Amendment to the Address; but there were persons who believed that the Government had determined to take the wind out of the sails of everybody by introducing comprehensive measures dealing with that distress; and many of the newspapers put out statements that the present Cabinet was going to do that for Ireland which had never been done before—namely, to foster and develop her industrial resources. Under those circumstances, therefore, they were uncertain as to whether or not they ought to move an Amendment. However, in Her Majesty's most gracious Speech, the only reference to the state of affairs in Ireland was contained in a paragraph which stated that a serious deficiency of the crops in Ireland had rendered necessary precautions on the part of the Government to guard against distress in certain districts, and that, with that view, instructions had been given for an ample distribution of food and fuel. They knew perfectly well that neither food nor fuel had been distributed by Her Majesty's Government; and if it had not been for the action of private charities, thousands of persons would have already died from actual famine in Ireland. Under those circumstances, it was felt by the Irish Members that the reference to the distress was very vague; and during the adjournment of the House on Thursday, his hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) drew up the Amendment now before the House. That Amendment stated that the Government had not taken adequate means to meet promptly and effectually the severe distress now existing and increasing in Ireland; it also stated their opinion that, to avert the horrors of famine, further and more vigorous measures were immediately necessary. In addition to that, it expressed their opinion that it was necessary to legislate in a comprehensive manner upon these questions. Then his hon. Friend proceeded to indicate that the principal cause why these famines were constantly recurring in Ireland was the evil tenure by which land was held. On Thursday they had a very extraordinary speech from the hon. Member who seconded the Address (Mr. J. P. Corry), to which he would make no further reference than to say that, though usually a most agreeable person, yet, when robed in the panoply of war, with his rapier by his side, he became the reverse, and was found unsparing in his attack on those who, if not his friends, were certainly not his foes. The right hon. Gentleman, too, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, observed, in the course of his speech on Thursday, that the hon. Member for Cork had given Notice of an Amendment to the Address, upon which he would then only observe that hon. Members would see, when Papers which had been presented were in their hands, that the Irish and English Governments had not been remiss in making use of the means at their disposal in alleviation of the distress. They would find, he said, that the Irish Local Government Board had taken the means of making itself acquainted with the condition of the districts where famine prevailed. In his (Mr. Mitchell Henry's) opinion, the Government would, therefore, have had just cause to complain if the Irish Members, without having seen those Papers, and not knowing from official sources what the Government had done, had desired, in the absence of such information, to discuss their conduct in the House accordingly. A most reasonable proposal was made to the Government—namely, that their criticisms should be postponed till the Papers were in their hands. But what did the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer say to that proposal? Animated, apparently, by the spirit of the Seconder of the Address, he was pleased to pass upon the Irish Members what he (Mr. Mitchell Henry) must stigmatize as the most uncalled-for and unfounded criticism that he had ever heard passed in that House upon men who were animated in their conduct by a sense of the deepest responsibility. The right hon. Gentleman had thought fit to tell them that if the chosen Representatives of Ireland preferred to palter with the subject of distress, and to think more of censuring the Government and of airing their speeches than of passing measures of relief, he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) had nothing more to say. The right hon. Gentleman then promised that the official Correspondence should be delivered to Members next morning. It was hardly necessary to tell the House that the Papers which were promised were not delivered the next morning.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER observed, that the Papers were promised the next day.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY said, he supposed that the Chancellor of the Exchequer claimed that the evening and the morning made up one day; but he should like to know why the Papers were not ready when Parliament met? The last despatch which had been issued was dated the 31st of January; and there was an interval, therefore, of five days during which time, if the Government had wished, the Papers could have been presented to the House. It was trifling with the whole subject to delay these Papers, and to tell them that the conduct of the Government could be discussed without them. Of course, they did not get the Papers till late the next evening, and on reading them he was not surprised that the Government did not wish them to be criticized, for those Papers showed that the Government had not only not done what it ought to have done to meet the distress, but had utterly failed to take a just view of its own responsibility and of the widespread area over which the distress prevailed.

As everything depended upon the contents of the Papers, he would, with the permission of the House, refer to them somewhat in detail. The first document was dated the 5th of September, and was a Circular from the Local Government Board to its Inspectors in Ireland, directing their attention to the threatened distress, and requesting them to make detailed Reports as to the condition of every district. The Inspectors took a considerable time to obtain the required information, for their Report did not appear to have been delivered in much less time than six weeks. The next document was dated the 28th of October, an interval of nearly eight weeks, and consisted of a letter from the Local Government Board to the Irish Government, directing its attention to the results of the inquiries made by the Inspectors. The Irish Government did nothing whatever with regard to the matter, so far as could be judged from the Papers. The next step was taken, he imagined, somewhere in the beginning of November; but he could not tell accurately, for the document was without date; but, under the circumstances, he thought it was one of the most cruel documents he had ever read. It was a Circular to the Guardians of the different Unions in Ireland, telling them to take care to lay in sufficient bedding in case their resources should be called upon further, and it told them to cleanse and whitewash the walls in the wards of their workhouses. Anyone who knew the Irish peasant must be aware that the workhouse was his greatest horror, and at that very moment there were numbers starving because they would not accept the Union relief and go into the workhouses; for in Ireland, unlike England, out-door relief was not allowed until all the workhouses were full. Considering that that Circular was the only communication that the Government had with the Guardians on the subject, and that, up to the time of its issue, it was the only public declaration of their intentions, he thought that it was the most heartless document ever issued even in the history of the Poor Law. The next date was the 14th of November, and between that time and the 28th of October something or other seemed to have alarmed even the Chief Secretary for Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman appeared to have come over to London to see the Heads of the Government, and on the 14th of November he wrote a letter to the Treasury asking it to relax the terms upon which ordinary loans were issued for land improvement by the Board of Works. On the same day the Treasury replied, agreeing to the proposal of the Irish Government. The letter appeared to have been written in the Office in London by the Chief Secretary, and to have been answered by the Treasury on the same day. He did not see how any minute investigation could have been made into the proposal during that time. The proposal was that loans should be advanced to Irish landlords who had any money left to take them up at 6½ per cent, in order that they might employ the starving people. At that time very few of the landlords were getting any rents at all. The Government and its Friends had harped greatly upon the fact that many of the tenants who could pay did not pay; but it was admitted that many could not pay whether they desired to do so or not. Yet the landlords were expected to pay 6½ per cent to the Government for the use of the money wherewith to employ the starving peasantry.

As might have been expected, very few loans were either applied for or taken up. It would appear that all that had been done up to the 11th of January was that loans to the extent of £113,000 had been applied for by landlords. He should like to know, however, how much of that sum was issued prior to the 12th of January, so as to give employment to the starving people? He might be wrong; but he felt quite sure that a very small portion of the £113,000 had then, or even now, been issued. The Irish Government then appeared to have become more alarmed, and to have applied to the Treasury to sanction a further relaxation of the rules for the issue of loans; and ultimately the Treasury sanctioned the issue of loans on more favourable terms. The reasonable terms, upon which so much had been said, were that the re-payment should be deferred for two years, and that the loans should be issued to the landlords at the rate of £3 8*s*. 6*d*. per cent. He did not consider that those were very liberal terms to the landlords who were expected to employ the people, and up to the present time the whole sum applied for was £284,000; but how much of that amount had been actually issued was only known to the Government themselves. But while all this was going on for a period of three precious working months from the beginning of September, the peasants had been living in a state of semi-starvation, consuming their seed potatoes, and, in some cases, compelled to feed on sea-weed. So far as the Government was concerned, not a finger had been stretched out for their relief, although two or three charitable funds had been started to supply food. He, for one, objected entirely to that indiscriminate system of relieving the distressed, for it had produced, and was now producing, the greatest demoralization. The Government had formed no comprehensive plan for dealing with the situation, although they were warned over and over again. They ought to have formed some plan for employing the people in the way in which they now wished them to be employed—namely, in remunerative works. But during all that time, from September till the month of November, and practically till the month of January, no employment was provided for the people, and no assistance was given them except that which was indiscriminately given in charity. He did not think that charity of that kind should have been extended to them; it might be all very well to supplement the employment of the able-bodied in public works; but to relieve distress such as that which existed amongst the people in the West and South of Ireland in such a manner was perfectly suicidal.

In the debate which had taken place, a great deal had been said on the other side of the House to lead to the belief that the distress was not so great as it had been represented to be. He would ask the House to consider whether the distress was great or not. In the Western districts of Ireland the distress was almost universal, and in one county in the Province of Ulster—that of Donegal—the distress was quite as bad as in the South and West. All that had been done to relieve it was from charitable funds lately raised in Dublin and in America; but during the last Session the Irish Representatives knew perfectly well what was coming, and made numerous representations to the Government. In the course of the summer, before September, a deputation of Irish Bishops, who might be supposed to know the condition of their flocks, waited upon the Lord Lieutenant, and represented to him that unless energetic measures were resorted to there would be absolutely starvation and famine in the course of a few months. Again, about the end of September or the beginning of October, a Memorial, signed by 70 Members of Parliament, was presented to the Prime Minister on the subject of the impending famine; but the only acknowledgment it called forth was the receipt upon the same day of a note from the Secretary of the Prime Minister, informing them that the Memorial had been received. No further attention had been paid by the Government to the representations either of the Irish Bishops or of the Irish Members. Nor was any attention paid to the representations of the Local Government Board. He would tell the House what the result had been by referring to the reports of the Special Commissioners whom the London newspapers had recently sent to various parts of Ireland to inquire into the distress. They were sent to find out whether the people were so sadly off as they were said to be, and whether the reports of the distress existing were true or not. He would first read extracts from letters in newspapers which supported Her Majesty's Government. On the 10th of January, the Correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph* wrote—

> "By the side of the road, on a patch of waste, or a mound of soil and rubbish such as one often sees about the premises of an untidy farmer, close to it stood a bench and a few articles of domestic utility, and from the base of the mound rose a little column of smoke. This was the residence of a man who, some time ago, the landlord evicted, and who stood there, towering far above his present habitation, to tell me as much of the fact as I cared to know. Thence we drove to the shore, and, giving the car in charge of a man idling there, we roamed among the sandy hillocks in search of something. 'Here it is,' cried my guide, and pointed to a hole in the bank partly stopped by a lobster pot. Looking in, we saw, as well as the gathering darkness allowed, that a cave had been excavated, and was used as a dwelling, on the floor being the ashes of an extinct fire, while, on ascending the bank, we found an aperture in the earth through which smoke had evidently long made its upward way. This was, indeed, the residence of another of Queen Victoria's subjects; and to this, unless something be speedily done, will many another come. The pressure of distress in and around Clifden is extreme. I go further, and declare that the people are at this moment starving, and that if they are not to perish of hunger instant measures must be adopted. The question is not of famine impending; but here the grisly spectre has arrived, and stalks abroad through the country seeking its victims."

On the 14th of January, Father Conway wrote from Screen—

> "The visit of the Correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph* on the 3rd instant proved a happy one for my poor people, and I have since received relief for 691 persons, which I hope will last for 10 days."

He gives instances of a man of 10 acres of land, and 10 in family, who ate nothing for 10 days but turnips sprinkled with a little Indian meal. Another, Widow Harte, ate nothing at all for two days, and for four days previously had only one meal on each day. On the 14th of January, Father Gearty wrote from Grange, County Sligo—

> "At this moment there are 60 or 70 families in appalling distress. In a short time 200 more will be added to the catalogue. The potatoes—even the small ones kept for seed—are almost all eaten. The people have no cattle, no credit, no food. Even here, where the people are comparatively comfortable, there are at this moment some without a morsel to eat. This very evening I saw the mother of a family who had eaten nothing for 24 hours. Hunger traced its sad lines upon her face. What would be the feelings of Her Majesty's Ministers if they were obliged to dine on a head of cabbage, minus potatoes, minus everything else, which was the Christmas dinner of people here."

The next extract he would read was one dated the 2nd of February, and was from the pen of a Correspondent of an Irish newspaper—

> "The present condition of things," he wrote, "is simply famine tempered by charity—that fully half the population are half-starving I will not exhaust your patience and my own by pretending to argue. It is like proving sunlight. Although I still make it my business to visit 80 or 90 cabins per day, and to satisfy myself minutely of their circumstances and resources, I have no idea of heaping up tabularies. It sickens me to recall the crowds of broken-spirited, cowering, half-clad men, women, and children that flit across my memory, squatted in the darkness around the turf ashes, or ravening their horrid mess of sea-weed or periwinkles; their potatoes gone since Christmas; nothing to sow; nothing to fish with; nothing to pawn; children without a rag of under-clothing; sick men and women without a drop of milk or tea to wet their lips with; hollow cheeks, lustreless eyes, broken hearts. I am heart-sick of it all—enough that I have in two days seen that scene repeated in every cruel variety of affliction in more than 90 cabins in these Islands."

So much for the exaggeration hinted at by hon. Gentlemen opposite. One of the first things done by Her Majesty's Government, when the Local Government Board represented to them that there was great distress existing, was to sanction the appointment of three additional Inspectors to keep them well informed as to the state of the country. That was on the 13th of November. The Irish Government asked the Treasury to agree to the appointment of three gentlemen at a salary of £500 a-year each, with travelling expenses, and an allowance of one guinea a-day, when absent from head-quarters. The Treasury agreed to the proposal; but thought it desirable to caution the Irish Government as to what class of person should be appointed. They desired that the services of gentlemen of adequate ability and experience should be secured. Whom, then, did the Irish Government appoint to visit the West coast of Ireland and keep the Government well informed of the state of events in that part of the country? Why, the Inspector appointed was a young gentleman of 25 or 26 years of age, the son of the recently-appointed Vice President of the Local Government Board in Dublin. That was considered to be an appointment of a gentleman of adequate ability, and qualified by previous experience to inform the Government of the state of things which existed. He would tell the House what that young gentleman did. Some time in the month of November, the people from the village of Tully, who were in the habit of visiting his (Mr. Mitchell Henry's) residence in order to sell their oats, as it saved them a journey of 25 or 26 miles to the nearest market, came to the farm yard as usual. On those occasions he generally saw those people, and had a chat with them; for they came from the extreme West, and did not live on his own property. On this occasion, however, he was so horrified to notice the change in their appearance that he could not rest in his bed after seeing them, but got up at night and wrote a letter to the Lord Lieutenant describing the state of things. To that letter he received no other reply than a bare acknowledgment of its receipt. His letter not only went into details, but urged the immediate necessity of something being done. What, then, did the newly-appointed Inspector do when he specially visited the district to inquire into his statements? It might have been thought that one of the first persons he would call on would have been the hon. Member himself; but although he drove under the very walls of his residence he did not visit him. Surely the next person he should have gone to see should have been the parish priest in that lonely district, for the state of destitution existing amongst the people was always better known to the priest than, perhaps, to anyone else; but the only person the Inspector went to see was the parish doctor. He had not a word to say against the doctor. He was a most excellent person. Anyone who knew the Irish peasant, however, would be aware that he would not send for the doctor first, and that the priest would be resorted to, unless he were exceedingly ill; but the doctor was an officer of the Local Government Board like himself, and the young Inspector went to him for his information. The doctor could not have shown him the state of destitution, because he did not go near the localities where it existed. He wished, however, above all things, to guard himself against making any attack against the parish doctor, for they had a most excellent man in that capacity, who did his duty admirably and was a pleasant neighbour; but he contended that if this young Inspector, the son of the Vice President of the Local Government Board, had had the ability and experience which were required, he would have gone to those best able to give him information, and not have slurred over his work in this way.

He would now read to the House one last extract, which related to a subject nearly as important as food—namely, the bedding of the people. In his letter to the Lord Lieutenant he drew attention to that subject, and it might have been expected that the gentleman sent to make inquiries would have spoken to him with regard to the state of things disclosed; but, as he had said before, he only received a bare acknowledgment of the letter, although he drew attention to the fact that the bedding of the people was in the pawnshop. That statement was confirmed shortly afterwards by the Correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph*, who said—

> "Clifden, January 10.
>
> "I visited the pawnshop in this town. The home-made woollen mufflers, even the pots off the fire, are brought to the pawnshop to raise money enough for a meal. In one room were upwards of 100 feather beds, pawned by the people from under them; and in the whole town there are no fewer than 500 beds and blankets. As for blankets—splendid home-made articles, heavy in weight and endless in wear—they were piled high in Mr. Conolly's store-rooms, along with heaps of men's coats, bundles of wool intended for winter spinning, fishing lines, and other things with which the people would not think of parting save in the last emergency. The anxiety of the poor folk about these articles must be troublesome even to such a kindly tradesman as my informant. Not only do they come again and again, begging that the pledges may be held over till better times, but they often present themselves at the shop asking to see their precious goods and have ocular proof that they are still within reach. Sometimes a rumour floats about, and finds eager credence, that Government or some charitable association is about to redeem all pledges, and then the pawnbroker's premises are besieged. Even as I remained with Mr. Conolly, a number of women gathered round on the bare chance, so it was said, of being able to carry away something; for what business, save that of redeeming the pledges of the poor, could two gentlemen have in a pawnshop?"

Perhaps the House would wonder that the poor peasantry were possessed of feather beds; but the fact was that when they killed their poultry they had nothing to do with the feathers but to use them for beds, and the making up of a feather bed was almost the work of a lifetime, and they would not have parted with them unless reduced to the utmost destitution. He had shown, by the extracts he had read, that the state of distress on the West coast of Ireland was intense at that moment. He wished to ask the House whether, from its knowledge of physiology, it could think it right to keep the people merely alive upon Indian meal without milk, or whether that was the proper way to feed them? Yet that was all that had been done. A little meal had been distributed, and the people were in a state of chronic starvation. Unless some other means of assistance were afforded to them, undoubtedly disease would break out amongst them, for it was impossible for human beings to live upon seaweed sprinkled over with meal. In one instance, he believed, a benevolent gentleman from Liverpool had distributed a quantity of tea and bread amongst the starving people. That was, however, the only instance in which such substantial relief had been given. He regretted that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Chief Secretary for Ireland were not in their places, for he wanted to know what the Government were going to do for the future? The Government seemed to treat the famine as they would a temporary emergency, like a fire or an accident in a coal mine, in which a subscription was to be raised, and a little assistance given. But what were the people to do for seed for next year's crop? The famine now was sore in the land, and unless energetic measures were taken it would become worse next year than it was now. They had eaten their seed potatoes, and had no materials for next year's crop.

And now let him ask—What had been the actual loss suffered by the people during the past year? In the single article of potatoes, which still formed the staple diet of the majority of the people in Ireland, the Returns of the Registrar General showed that the loss amounted last year to not less than between £5,000,000 and £6,000,000. The Government contemplated an expenditure of £500,000 in recuperative works from the surplus revenues of the Irish Church. But it would take nearly £500,000 to buy potato seed if the people were to have anything to eat in the autumn and winter of 1881. The action of the Government reminded him of Nero. They had been fiddling in the autumn instead of instituting works which they were now desirous to begin. At that very moment the people ought to be engaged in tilling their little patches of ground and putting in the seed if they were to have a crop next season. In the West of Ireland the potato crop had to be planted in the middle of February or March. When the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer claimed to be taking care of the people of Ireland, would he, then, tell them what the Government was doing to supply the people with seed to sow during the present spring? Unless hundreds of thousands of pounds were expended, there would be no harvest at all next year. The Government had had full warning of the condition of the country; but all the relief that had been given consisted in the application of loans to the extent of £300,000. But the Treasury Bench had been in no want of warnings during the past few years. The House might recollect how he, for one, had in the various debates that had taken place upon Irish affairs protested against the statements as to the great and extraordinary prosperity of the country. It was the favourite dish to put before the House to inform it of the manner in which the deposits in the savings banks were increasing, and how the people were better clothed and better fed. For himself, he was not to blame for those representations, for he had always protested against them; and during the Home Rule debate in 1874 he took as his text the economical condition of Ireland. His demand for permission to the Irish people to manage their own local affairs he based upon the fact that the Government in England so mismanaged the affairs of Ireland that famine would be the certain consequence of a couple of bad harvests. In 1874 he gave it as his opinion that that prosperity upon which so much stress was laid was altogether illusory, and that the money in the banks, to a large extent, belonged to rich graziers living in Liverpool and elsewhere, who had invested their money in cattle and made large profits. The warnings which the Government had received were certified by a complete body of statistics, and the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant and the Local Government Board ought to have had those statistics at their fingers' ends. It appeared that the potato crop in 1876 and the two preceding years was worth about £34,000,000; but in 1877-9 it was only worth £16,500,000. Thus, in three years, there was a loss affecting the poor tenants in Ireland amounting to £17,500,000. In 1877 there was a loss, and again this year there was a loss of between £5,000,000 and £6,000,000. To meet that deficiency, he repeated, the Government had advanced less than £300,000. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Plunket), who had appeared as the defender of the Government, on Friday night said that the "distress came upon the people suddenly." But was that so? He held that it was not, and that the Government had received ample warning during the last three years, in the course of which the savings banks had, according to a Report of the Registrar General, lost £3,699,000. The bank deposits had also decreased by a sum of £1,500,090, making £5,250,000. It was true that there was in that time an increase in the returns of the Post Office Savings Bank, and in Indian Stocks and State securities, amounting to about £600,000. It was easy to understand why the Post Office Savings Bank had obtained an increase, while the banks had less money intrusted to them. The failure of the City of Glasgow Bank frightened everyone, and induced many persons to place their money where no risk could be incurred. In Ireland also, as in England, there were a considerable number of persons who were in receipt of small incomes or pensions, and they naturally desired to be perfectly secure. But was the increase of £603,000 in Government and India Stock and in the Post Office banks any set-off to the £5,250,000 that had been withdrawn from the banks and the savings banks? In less than three years they found that the small tenant farmers had lost £17,500,000 in potatoes, and that £5,500,000 had been withdrawn from the savings and other banks. Deducting from that roughly the gain in the Post Office Savings Banks, it showed a loss to the Irish people in the three years of £21,000,000. And was that state of things, he would ask, to be coped with by the offer of loans to landlords for the employment of labour for the next few months?

He would now pause for a few moments to inquire how it was that living was so precarious in Ireland. Why were famines so constantly recurring in that country? Well, the Irish peasant, in his normal condition, was miserably fed. The Irish peasantry in the South and West, and, in fact, the great majority of the Irish people, scarcely ever ate meat more than six times in a year, if as often as that. A great many did not eat meat more than twice a-year. English people—he meant the English artizan—ate meat three and four times a-day, and thought himself hardly used if he did not get it so often. The Irish peasant, on the other hand, was fed upon Indian meal and upon milk, and, if he could get them, upon potatoes, which were generally exceedingly bad, for during the last three years they had become worse and worse, owing to the constant use of seaweed, the only available manure. What a contrast his condition presented with that of the English artizans in towns. The latter were the great customers for Irish produce, and by their means prices had been so greatly raised. But the Irish peasant was nearly starved; and the lamp of life, in his case feeble at the best, was, therefore, easily extinguished. Ireland, in fact, had undergone within the last 25 years a most remarkable change in the matter of its agriculture. Hon. Members did not probably know the exact circumstances attending the pursuit of agriculture in Ireland at the present time. They often heard it stated that Ireland was specially suitable for the grazing of cattle; but the cattle trade in which Ireland was engaged was the most unprofitable in the world. So soon as the cattle were half fed they were taken off to England, and thus the Irish soil was deprived of the manure and bones and the other fertilizing agents which properly belonged to it. As a consequence, the land had long been undergoing deterioration, till, in many districts, it would scarcely even support half-fed cattle. Then there were no manufactures upon which the Irish people could fall back for support. The whole number of manufactories in Ireland was only 273, and that included the flax mills at Belfast, of which they were justly proud. Those manufactories gave employment only to 80,000 persons. The fisheries during the period from 1858 to 1878 showed a decline of from 12,000 boats and 52,000 men in 1858 to 5,700 boats and less than 20,000 men in 1878. Such was the deterioration of the country from the driving away of the Irish peasantry from the fertile land and edging him off to the side of the mountains and the coast, that during the past 20 years the area devoted to cereal crops had decreased by 1,000,000 acres, and that devoted to green crops by 300,000 acres. All that land had gone out of cultivation, and had been turned into indifferent pasture. About 1,231,000 acres had ceased to afford profitable labour to the peasants during that period of 20 years. Against that they had to set an increase of 518,000 acres brought under pasture. Now, he would like to ask the House what had become of the 712,000 acres unaccounted for? If the Government Return were examined, the great increase in the amount of waste lands would be seen; and it would be noticed that a great proportion of the 712,000 acres had gone back to waste, affording little food for cattle, and only fit for the birds of the air. The whole case was gone into in *The Irish Agricultural Gazette*, in which it was stated a short time ago that some of this land in Ireland had become so sterile that it would hardly support any cattle upon it. The hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin described a visit to his Friend the hon. Member for Dublin (Sir Arthur Guinness) in the county Mayo. He (Mr. Mitchell Henry) regretted that speech very much, for the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman was calculated, no doubt most unintentionally, entirely to mislead the House as to the condition of the Irish peasants. He said, perfectly truly, that the peasants upon the mountain slopes of that estate had not had their rents raised during the whole time the hon. Member for Dublin had possessed the property. But the hon. Baronet had had a predecessor, by whom the tenants were placed on such sterile places as the hon. Member admitted made it impossible for them to live. The hon. and learned Gentleman had given an affecting picture of the reception he met with when he went amongst those poor people. He described how, when their landlord went amongst them, they held up their children and blessed him. What was the reason for their conduct? The hon. Baronet was known to be entirely independent of his rents, and it was his habit to do everything for their comfort and prosperity, and the reason why those poor people were so fervent in their blessings on Sir Arthur Guinness was that the visits of other landlords in the locality to their tenants were so few and far between. The tenants in the Western portion of Ireland were totally unaccustomed to be visited by anyone but those who received their rents, and were quite unused to finding any human interest taken in their welfare; and the gratitude of the tenants upon the estate of the hon. Baronet who were differently treated was, therefore, unbounded. When, again, the hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin warned the House not to sanction any scheme for converting the tenants of the West of Ireland into peasant proprietors he left upon the House a very mischievous impression. In the West of Ireland there were at least 1,000,000 acres of land which were only awaiting the labour of man to become fertile and smiling farms. He would ask of the Government to look at the question as one unconnected with politics. Hitherto, both sides of the House had never looked at Ireland but in a Party light. No Government had ever yet regarded Ireland in an economic point of view. Ireland was simply an undeveloped estate, and instead of emigration being required the loss of every man who left the country was a loss to the Empire. Ireland had not too large a population, although there was, no doubt, a local congestion of population in some districts. That state of things had been brought about by the people being gradually pushed off from the land on which they had lived, and being sent to the edges and waste patches of ground. Why, then, did the Irish tenants ask for fixity of tenure? It seemed to be thought an extraordinary thing that the Irish tenant should want fixity of tenure. Why did the millowner ask for fixity of tenure in his mill? The Irish soil was the manufactory of Ireland, and the tenants were the manufacturers; but they could be removed from their land at the will of their landlords whenever they were desirous of using it for other purposes, and the tenants were, therefore, naturally much discontented and asked for fixity. Was there anything extraordinary in that demand? In Ulster they had fixity of tenure—namely, the Ulster custom, which prevented a landlord from arbitrarily evicting a tenant; but there was no such custom in the rest of Ireland, and there was nothing to prevent arbitrary evictions except public opinion and the danger of the proceeding. The only thing which had been done to insure fixity of tenure to the Irish tenant was the passing of the Land Bill of the late Government; but that Bill had this great defect—it legalized eviction, and made it respectable by affixing a price to it. The law said that no tenant should be evicted without receiving not more than a seven years' rent as compensation; consequently, that which it was discreditable to do before the Act was not discreditable since, because it could be said that the tenant received the legal amount of compensation. But what could compensate the Irish tenant for the loss of his holding, which was his manufactory in which he had been brought up? No mere money compensation of a few pounds could be adequate to satisfy the Irish tenant for being evicted from his home.

And now, he would ask, what were the remedies for the existing state of things? If Ireland were regarded as an undeveloped estate it would be easy to find the remedy. The first thing to do with an undeveloped estate was to make roads and communications through it. Why should not the Government adopt a bold policy, and propose to the House the advancing of £10,000,000 or £15,000,000 on security for the making of branch railways in various parts of Ireland? That was a proposal made by the late Lord George Bentinck, but which was defeated by the Liberal Party, in conjunction with the Irish Members. It was true that some of the Irish Representatives voted for the proposal; but the majority voted against it because it was introduced by a Conservative. Let the Government do what it had done in India. For years the Indian Government had been making railways and other works, because they knew that India was an undeveloped estate. What reason could be alleged why Ireland should be left entirely undeveloped, while public works of all kinds were carried on in India? Thirty-three millions of money had recently been paid for the purchase of one system of railways by the Indian Government; and, at the present time, works were being made all over the face of the country. In France the Minister of Public Works, recognizing the fact that France was, to a great extent, an undeveloped estate, had brought in Bills for the making of various railways at an expense, probably, of £70,000,000 or £80,000,000. In Ireland private enterprize had made the great trunk lines, and what was required was a number of small branch lines to connect the main railways with out-lying towns. The Irish Railway Companies were unable, or unwilling, to make those lines, and they must be made by Government assistance. The Government had recently been appealed to, to make advances to form a branch line 12 miles in length, which would connect the Midland Great Western Railway with the town of Loughrea. The assent of the Midland Great Western Company was obtained to the scheme, provided the Government would advance the money to them at 3½ per cent, for which they offered the security of millions of capital. They also had the consent of every landowner, with the exception of one, through whose land the line would pass; every tenant through whose holding the line would pass had also given his consent. The only landlord who stood out was one who drew a revenue of £25,000 or £30,000 a-year from the county, but who never went near it or spent sixpence in it, and he refused to accept the terms to which the resident landlords assented —namely, 23 years' purchase, preferring to see whether the arbitrators would not give him more. Well, the Government, when asked for assistance to make that line, would not hear of it. When the deputation had an interview with a Member of the Government they were received with great cordiality, and, apparently, great interest was taken in their scheme; but after a few weeks all recollection of the matter seemed to become effaced from the mind of the Government. Another proposal was made for a branch to connect the town of Tuam with the Midland Great Western Railway, in which the Board of Guardians of the Unions offered to guarantee the interest of the money required, if only the Government would bring in a Bill to allow them to do so. Were the Government prepared to do so? As he understood, they were acting on the principle that the works should be completed alone. If it were really the case that the Government, with the experience of 1846 and 1847 before them, had not been alive to the danger of another famine, and had not done what they could to ward it off, no words could sufficiently express the censure that ought to be conveyed; but the very graveness of the charge made it the more necessary that it should be absolutely made out. This Government or any Government had the right, when such a charge was made, to call upon Members, entirely irrespective of Party, to support them if the charge were not proved. The difficulties of governing any country would be exceedingly great if credence were given to such a charge; and in the special position of Ireland they would greatly increase those difficulties and make government almost impossible. When he said the charge was not made out, he must not be supposed to doubt the conviction of its correctness on the part of those who made it. No doubt there was great distress in Ireland, and he did not wish to make light of it; but, remembering what occurred 35 years ago, he believed the present state of things was as yet very different. He did not think the hon. Member for Galway had justified his statement that there was a famine; it could not be said that was proved. The two main statements made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer were that the Government had accumulated stores of food and fuel, and that they had relaxed the restrictions with regard to out-door relief. He understood these two statements to mean that the Government were determined to prevent a famine, and they believed they would be able to do it. He was talking of absolute famine, and of keeping the people alive. He was not saying that, though the people might be kept alive, there might not be great misery in Ireland; but he understood the Government to declare they were taking steps to avert a famine in the belief that they could do it, and, therefore, he could not vote for the Amendment. Two things had been stated with regard to the action of the Government; the first was, that they ought to have allowed the accumulations of stores to be made known earlier, and the other, that they ought to have relaxed the restrictions on out-door relief some months ago.

MR. SYNAN: Where are the accumulations? I know of none.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Let me correct the right hon. Gentleman. I have not said that we have accumulated stores, but that one object we had in view was to ascertain that food and fuel could be had at any proper notice; that we had inquired into the necessity for accumulating stores, and that, having reference to the means of communication and the means of obtaining supplies, of which we had good information, we did not think it necessary to accumulate stores of our own.

MR. W. E. FORSTER thought that considerably increased the responsibility of the Government. He certainly understood the statement to be that accumulations had been made; he now understood that they had satisfied themselves of their power of getting stores quickly to the distressed districts, and that they were determined to do so. One objection was made that the Government had not at an earlier period informed the country what they intended to do, and also that the regulation as to out-door relief had not been relaxed some months ago. Well, with regard to the negligence in the first matter, he thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made out an intelligible case. It would have caused alarm, and one effect of it the right hon. Gentleman did not mention. It would have discouraged private subscriptions, and it would have been a great pity had they been discouraged, for everybody knew that they were very much wanted to assist and help the Government. And with regard to the relaxation of the restrictions, he confessed that he understood that for some time the Guardians had had the power to do that. ["No, no!"]

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: The Local Government Board had power to inform the Guardians that they might grant out-door relief.

MR. W. E. FORSTER: The Local Government Board had power to inform the Guardians that that might be done, although it was against the law; that it might be broken, and an indemnity would be asked for.

MR. J. LOWTHER: I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon. That is not exactly so. What took place is this. The Local Government Board were instructed to take care, in the event of famine being imminent, that they were fully informed of the power given by the Executive Government to relax the law.

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY: When were the Orders relaxed?

Mr. J. LOWTHER: No, they have not been relaxed.

Mr. W. E. FORSTER had supposed the Guardians were informed that that might be done. ["No, no!"] Then, again, that increased the responsibility of the Government, and the stories they heard from day to day made it clear that the Government must not lose a day nor an hour in removing the restrictions; for they meant that a man could not be relieved without losing his land, and that was a tremendous penalty. The Government ought to have had better reasons than they had given why they had not removed these restrictions before. The question raised was not merely whether the amount of relief given had been sufficient, but whether the mode in which the relief had been given was satisfactory. The hon. Member for Galway had made some excellent remarks about the demoralization which followed charity; but the question whether the Government ought to have given more employment, or caused more employment to be given by others, was not raised by the Amendment. The question raised by it was—would the Government avert the horrors of famine, or would they not? How could they avert those horrors with the least ill-effects, with the least demoralization of the people, was a very important question; but it was not the first question; it was not the question raised by the Amendment, which was simply whether the Government were taking steps to avert the horrors of famine. In voting with the Government, he understood them to pledge themselves to give the relief which was necessary, and in thus voting he would hold the Government to their pledge. Then would come the question how that relief could be given to do the least harm to the people who were the recipients of relief. He supposed the proper time for the discussion of this matter would be when the Bill was presented for the second reading; but he observed that, in addition to loans to the landlords and to sanitary authorities, the Government had also thought fit to express their intention of lending money through baronial presentment sessions. He thought, also, that 90 sessions were already at work in that matter, or that applications had been made from 90. Well, he should have wished that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said a little more as to the mode in which he intended to guard against the evils attendant upon that system, remembering what took place 35 years ago. He thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer admitted there had been great evils then; but he gave no information as to how they were now to be guarded against. He hoped his Irish Friends would not think that he was unduly interfering in that matter. There was no doubt, however, that that system had completely broken down. He was sensible of the difficulties of carrying on such an organization successfully. It was a very difficult matter when they set people to work, not for the purpose of getting work done, but that they might be paid for doing it. They had only to consider the least dangerous mode of undertaking it when they entered upon the execution of a large public work upon that principle. Reference had been made to a project of railway extension with a view of providing work for the people. There was no doubt that a railway would be of advantage to a district, and that railways were of public benefit to a country; but the misfortune was that they had to try and stave off immediate want, and the people they wanted to relieve were not always those who could be employed in the construction of a railway. Sanitary works had been spoken of, and, no doubt, a great deal might be done in that direction. Sewage and drainage works might be carried on in many parts to the profit both of tenants and landlords, and with possibly less danger than might be expected to arise from other modes of affording relief, because in cases of that kind this was simply the proposal of a way to get work done which would be done by the proprietor if he had the means of doing it himself. When the money passed through the hands of a private landlord, of course he took care that it was properly spent, and that the work done was necessary and good. But the way in which the money for public works was spent had been before, and he supposed it would be now, something like this—the ratepayers were called together to say what was necessary, and what sum could be expended in the district for roads, bridges, or other useful improvements. Each individual who voted would have but little charge on himself, and his great desire was to get as much done as possible. Now, he was sure his right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Admiralty had studied these questions sufficiently to know how completely that system had formerly failed in its application; and he (Mr. W. E. Forster) had been rather alarmed by the accounts which he had heard a day or two ago that application had been made in some quarters where there was no distress. There was undoubtedly a feeling prevailing that if the Government would lend money on such easy terms, they would hardly be doing their duty if they did not go for having as much of it as possible for their respective districts. The system which had broken down in 1847 had cost an enormous sum—he believed £3,000,000 or £4,000,000—and had failed, both as to its object of affording relief, and the producing of useful works. The report of the Society of Friends had shown that in many cases it was the able-bodied, who did not require relief, who were assisted, and the weak and suffering were left without aid. Sir Charles Trevelyan had said that in the first year—1846—a rush had been made upon the fund. The special object of relieving the people had been lost sight of; and, in many cases, the avowed object was to obtain a share of the grant. This operated on the class of works which were executed. He (Mr. W. E. Forster) had ventured to refer to that testimony, as he hoped the Government would not altogether disregard the experience of past times. There were two other points that seemed to him to be of such importance that he would like to refer to them before he sat down. He was not prepared to state, in the terms of the Amendment, that the land tenure—important as it was—was the sole cause of the distress in Ireland. But it was the most important Irish question that could be brought before the House, and the one most urgently requiring consideration, and he did hope that even in this Session they would not separate without attending to it. On this subject they had passed a Resolution brought forward by his hon. Friend the Member for Reading (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) last year; but it was mere trifling with the question to keep it on the Journals of the House without endeavouring in some way to enforce it. He could not express his disappointment—it hardly seemed a strong enough word—his bitter disappointment—at the distress which had again overtaken Ireland, and the present condition of that country. He did not believe that there was a famine, but there was great distress and suffering; and it was sad that they should feel that it was true what the hon. Member for Cork had said—that the cultivators of the soil in Ireland had only two harvests between them and famine. That was a matter which was most discouraging, most sorrowful, and, he need not add, disgraceful—disgraceful not to this or that Government, but to the whole constituency of the three Kingdoms. He had formed himself a more hopeful opinion of the actual condition of the country. The autumn of the year before last he had visited one or two districts of Connemara, which he had visited before in the year of the Famine. He did not say that he had the best opportunity for ascertaining the exact condition of the population; but, from what he saw, he thought it had much improved from what it was in 1845. The people had seemed much more comfortable than they had been before. Well, it was disheartening to find that they were now, if not suffering famine, at least threatened with it. In fact, what he heard now reminded him of what he had himself witnessed in 1845, the year which preceded the two famine years. He agreed that such a state of things should not be allowed to continue, and that the Legislature should do all in its power to effect a remedy. There were two new features in the present state of things—one discouraging, and the other encouraging. The discouraging fact was the agitation which it was feared would prevent the people of England from doing their duty. But he felt assured they would not yield to that temptation. They were determined to undo any harm the agitation might produce. The encouraging fact was this—if there had been hard and selfish landlords in Ireland, there were now many more cases in which the landlords were recognizing their duty and attempting to perform it. The landlords in Ireland were suffering very much from the evils of the past, from what harsh men of their own class might have done. Moreover, the position of tenant and landlord had been different in Ireland from what it was in England and Scotland. In Ireland a larger portion of the gross produce was taken by the landlord in the shape of rent than in England or Scotland; and, on the other hand, the landlord did not make real improvements in anything like the same proportion. The Irish landlord took more and did much less. But there were a great many exceptions now. He believed everywhere throughout the country they would find Irish landlords examples not merely to Ireland, but to England and Scotland. Even if the hon. Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell) were to pass his Bill to get rid of landlordism, he would be obliged to introduce a saving clause excepting such landlords as the hon. Baronet the Member for Dublin (Sir Arthur Guinness) and the hon. Member for Galway (Mr. Mitchell Henry). But there were a great many other landlords also who, without the means of these two Gentlemen, were working very hard on their estates for the benefit of the people. He would end by saying he wanted those good and patriotic landlords, and good and patriotic men and women in Ireland who were not owners of land, to have some confidence in the sympathy of their fellow-citizens in England and Scotland, and to feel that there was a general conviction on both sides of the House that there was no way in which they could better fulfil the wishes of their constituents than by taking counsel with the Irish Members to do whatever the law could do to better the position of the Irish peasant.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am sure the House will heartily reciprocate the wish which the right hon. Gentleman has expressed. There is but one desire in the House, as, I am sure, there is but one desire in the country—and that is to do all that is possible for the amelioration of the condition of Ireland. The one desire which we have is to place the people of that country in such a position that they may live happily, prosperously, and contentedly as subjects of the Queen. The right hon. Gentleman very properly alluded to the great responsibility of the Government in this matter. Her Majesty's Ministers feel that responsibility; they have fully realized it, and they entirely undertake it. It is their duty to prevent a famine in Ireland. They are conscious of that duty, and the steps which they have endeavoured to take during the last three or four months have been directed with the firm resolve, as far as they could, to prevent the horrors of famine in the Sister Island. The duty which we have undertaken, and the task which properly falls upon us, is one of very considerable difficulty. If we had early embarked on ambitious schemes of reproductive works in Ireland, under an apprehension of famine—if we had sounded the notes of alarm—we should have deranged the whole course of the natural supplies of food to the people and the whole course of their employment, and we should have interfered with existing social conditions, and created an amount of embarrassment and difficulty for which we should have been justly held responsible. Our course has been most careful. From day to day and week to week we have watched the progress of the calamity which we saw impending in the distressed portions of Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman very properly asks who in the Cabinet is responsible for the condition of Ireland? And he remarked upon the absence of the Chief Secretary and the Lord Lieutenant from the Cabinet. The whole Cabinet is responsible for the condition of Ireland; and we have not ceased to take constant precautions, and to inform ourselves, both by personal communication with the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary, of every proceeding and of every symptom of the malady which seemed to be afflicting Ireland. As the Papers show, we directed our serious attention to the subject early in September; but I do not rely upon these Papers, except as indications of the care and duty which rested upon us to provide such measures as, in our judgment, were necessary in the emergency. The right hon. Gentleman referred to the understanding which has been attached to some remarks of the Chancellor of the Exchequer a few days ago. I may be permitted to read a sentence from a private letter of the Lord Lieutenant to the Home Secretary, to show precisely what view his Lordship had on the question of fuel. He says, writing in December last—

> "The measures which have been already sanctioned by the Cabinet will, as regards fuel in certain districts"—the distressed ones—"have the effect of meeting any wants that may arise when the present stocks are exhausted."

And, as regards food, we have the strongest reason to believe that there will be no difficulty whatever in providing supplies, when it is known that their application will be authorized. The right hon. Gentleman insists on the fact that the Local Government Board have not informed the Boards of Guardians to relax the rules in regard to out-door relief. In this also we acted advisedly. We had Inspectors on the spot. The Local Government Board was charged by Her Majesty's Government to watch the progress of the distress most narrowly; but we did not tell every Board of Guardians, or any Board of Guardians, to relax the operations of the Poor Law until we saw that a real necessity for it had arisen. We took the responsibility on ourselves, and we believe we have acted wisely, in order to prevent an indiscriminate and unnecessary application of this out-door relief. The right hon. Gentleman knows that persons holding more than a quarter of an acre of land are disqualified from obtaining out-door relief. That rule has been relaxed so as to allow out-door relief to be given to persons really destitute. The right hon. Gentleman has insisted with very great force on the errors committed in the administration of relief under the system of large public works in 1847 and 1848. The Government have all along felt that any large system of public works was open to great objection; that it carried with it the impossibility of supervision, or of exercising such control over it as would secure the desired end—the relief of the destitute. Our object has been that relief should be given in the least injurious form to the persons who received it. In the first instance, we desired to stimulate applications from landlords who wished to improve their own property and who had a care for the people. In the next place, we offered loans to the sanitary authorities and to the presentment sessions, and insisted that the amounts should be returned within a certain period of time. The works undertaken in consequence will be carefully supervised by the local county surveyor—the county itself being responsible for the capital sum advanced. Greater supervision will be exercised in that way than could be done in the case of vast public works. Where many thousands of persons might be employed it would be quite impossible to exercise effectual supervision. Another matter I may mention in passing is that of the food supply. Upon that question I beg to refer to the opinion of Sir Charles Trevelyan, who states, in effect, that neither wholesale dealers in towns nor retail dealers in rural districts will lay in their usual stocks of food or make any extraordinary exertions to supply it while they have a prospect of the Government competing with them in providing food for the people. These words, I think, go far to justify the cautious course the Government have followed. It has been their desire not to interfere with the natural means of trade supply and employment, but only to supplement and aid those means when they appeared to fall short of what was required. As to railways, the Government have not been unwilling to consider proposals made, under already existing Acts, to assist in operations of that character; but, as the right hon. Gentleman has shown, such railway works could not be carried out, in all human probability, successfully, in order to meet the present emergency and the present distress. An Act of Parliament would have, perhaps, to be procured; and a contractor would have to be obtained, who could not be bound to find employment for persons in the particular district through which the railway passed, and the consequence would be that other people would be imported into a locality already suffering from distress. The other day some works were to be carried out in Dublin, and the contract was obtained by a Scotchman, to the great dissatisfaction of persons in Dublin who sought employment. But the Lord Mayor and Corporation showed that they could not do otherwise than accept the lowest tender. Would not something similar be the case with regard to those railways? The hon. Member for Galway shook his head.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY said, he had spoken of two particular cases in which persons on the spot would be employed.

MR. W. H. SMITH: Then there is another point. If employment is given, it should not be of such a kind as to interfere with the proper production of food for the people. I do not think it necessary or desirable that I should follow my right hon Friend in the remarks he made with reference to the events of last week. We are here in presence of a much more serious matter than anything which can happen to a political Party; and I think we can appeal not only to hon Gentlemen opposite, but to the country, to support the Government in the duty which they have to discharge at this time, and that is, to care for those poor people in the manner which, as set forth in the Treasury Minute that has been laid on the Table of the House, will afford relief with the least demoralizing effect to those distressed fellow-subjects. The hon. Member for Galway (Mr. Mitchell Henry) referred to the error which he thought the Government had committed in not announcing their proposals earlier, so as to prevent the necessity for the collection of money in the form of charity. On the other hand, I take credit, on the part of the Government, that they did not do so. It is most desirable, as the right hon. Gentleman has said, that just now any effort they might make should be supplemented by private charity; and we know that any effort the Government makes does check relief from private individuals, and, in a measure, deter them from discharging a duty which is incumbent upon them, and which they would otherwise discharge. The hon. Member has referred to the conditions under which a large number of the people of Ireland are living. I own that those conditions are sad to the last degree. They deserve the consideration of Parliament and of all persons who take an interest in the welfare of their fellow-subjects, and they deserve still more the full consideration of gentlemen who own property in Ireland, and live amongst the people there; because, after all, anyone who has any knowledge of social affairs is aware that law has very much less to do with the conduct of the people than the influences which are otherwise exercised upon them. I cannot help feeling that it is a misfortune of the gravest character that so many persons should be contented to live on such small patches of land, because, certainly, when there is any failure in their crops, they must fall into that destitution which has been described by the hon. Member for Galway. I may also be permitted to refer to a question which the hon. Gentleman raised, and which was also raised the other evening with moderation by the hon. and gallant Member for Galway (Major Nolân), and that is, the necessity of making some provision for procuring seed for the occupiers of land. Many persons, landlords and others, who take an interest in the welfare of those people have already procured seed to a very considerable extent. We had information this morning that some vessels had been chartered to go to the West coast of Ireland with seed, which in a measure would afford relief. With reference to the Bill which has been brought forward in the name of the hon. and gallant Member for Galway, I should say that the Government, though most desirous that it should be read a second time tonight, are not prepared fully to accept all its provisions. There are, in fact, several points in the proposal of the hon. Member to which I take exception. In the first place, the Bill has reference exclusively to potatoes, and I believe it would be a great misfortune if the cultivation of potatoes alone were encouraged in the distressed district; for, as I have already said, it is a mistake to rely entirely upon one crop, which might possibly be a failure. Again, I cannot think it wise that the seed potatoes should be sold at less than their proper value. It is of the greatest importance that trade should be encouraged to do for the country all that it possibly can do during the present crisis, and I fear that the proposal to sell seed potatoes below their market price will have the effect of stopping the importation of them into any part of Ireland. It matters comparatively little whether the farmers paid a shilling or so, more or less, for their seed potatoes; what is all-important is that the seed should be sown and the crop put into the ground. However, the Government will be able to state their views on this and other details more fully in Committee on their own Bill, or on the Bill of the hon. and gallant Member. I trust, therefore, that the hon. and gallant Gentleman will understand that we are fully prepared to give the subject very careful consideration — in fact, have given it the most careful consideration—and will be prepared, at the proper time, to introduce clauses to give effect to our views. We have not moved earlier because we did not wish to interfere with the market, or raise hopes sooner than was desirable; but the Government will give every possible assistance which they believe would tend to confer real benefits on the farmers. I do not propose to follow the hon. Member for Galway, and my right hon. Friend, on the question of land tenure, or peasant proprietorship, or any of those points referred to in the Amendment. What I desire to address myself to is, simply, whether the Government are doing and endeavouring to do their duty in the matter of this distress which exists in some parts of Ireland. I think I have answered the questions of the right hon. Gentleman opposite. I have shown that the matter has been constantly before us, that we have not lost sight of it for a single moment since Parliament rose last August; and that we have fully understood our responsibility, and fully accept it. Deplorable as is the present state of some parts of Ireland, I hope that, by the blessing of Providence, there will be a good harvest this year, and that the distress will, in a short time, pass away.

MR. T. DICKSON hoped that the House would not accept the statement made by more than one hon. Member as to the unsympathizing attitude of the inhabitants of the North of Ireland towards their distressed fellow-countrymen. In justice to Ulster he begged them to believe, and, indeed, could say from his own knowledge, that that was not the case. The hon. Member for Belfast (Mr. J. P. Corry) had spoken of the prosperity of Ulster, and of the great revival of trade. He (Mr. T. Dickson) would admit that there was in Ulster at the present time a very great revival of trade; but he would like to ask the House what immediate connection the revival of the linen trade and of the shipping interest had possibly with the agricultural distress? Although, at the present moment, there existed no starvation and no want in Ulster, the people were in penury; their savings had been swept away, and the small farmers of Ulster were in the very deepest distress, bordering, indeed, on starvation. One great point of safety in Ulster was that which the Chief Secretary sneered at—the Ulster tenant right. It was the basis of credit for the small farmers at the present time; and although their savings had been entirely swept away during the past two or three years of distress, the tenant right of Ulster was still the basis of credit upon which the small farmers now depended for carrying them through the present crisis. The Seconder of the Address had stated the great grievance of Ireland to be over-population. Was there any Member of the House who believed that Ireland was really over-populated with 5,000,000 of people, and that the country, if properly developed, was not capable of supporting twice that number? It had been a matter of surprise to many Members of the House that the Seconder of the Address, in the long discursive speech he had made, should have evaded all reference to the subjects of the Queen's Speech; but he (Mr. T. Dickson) thought he could give the House the explanation. The hon. Member for Belfast (Mr. J. P. Corry) had been called upon to address a great Orange soirée, and, instead of delivering his speech to that assemblage, he had kept it for the House of Commons. He could not but look with regret upon the unfinished line of railway between Londonderry and Donegal. The Bill had passed all stages in the House of Commons last Session, but had been arbitrarily thrown out in "another place," though if it had become law there would have been employment in Donegal for hundreds of the population. The First Lord of the Admiralty had said they had first to get an Act of Parliament and buy land before they could proceed with railways. There were, however, two railways which had got the Act of Parliament; and, so far as he could find, there had been no response from the Board of Works as to giving money for the beginning of the work. He believed, personally, that had the Memorial which had been signed by the Irish Members received the attention of the Government the distress would have been averted; and, owing to this inaction on the part of the Government, he should support the hon. Member for the county Cork in the Amendment which he had moved to the Address.

MR. HERMON said, the hon. Member for the county of Cork (Mr. Shaw) had placed before the House facts which were well worthy of consideration. The hon. Gentleman had spoken in much more moderate terms of the anticipated famine than some of the speakers who followed him. He agreed that this was a time, not for talk, but for action. Believing in the axiom "*Bis dat qui cito dat,*" he urged on the Government the necessity of avoiding anything like delay. If the Government were not certain that they had already made a proper estimate of the amount which would be required, he hoped they would not hesitate for a moment to ask for full power to deal with a most distressing event in a manner that would be worthy of this country. He spoke feelingly on this subject, as he had himself witnessed something of the same kind during the cotton famine in Lancashire. Impressed as he was with the dire necessity which might befall an almost helpless people, he thought Her Majesty's Government could not be too earnest nor too ready in their efforts to alleviate the distress. At the same time they ought to take care that nothing should be done to demoralize the people. He feared that some of the speeches delivered by hon. Gentlemen opposite had had the effect of checking the flow of those voluntary subscriptions which were so necessary in times of great trouble. In his opinion, some of the provisions of the Bill introduced by the Government were not sufficiently wide; and he could not help thinking that a generous and sympathizing Parliament would support without hesitation any Ministry which, in the face of this dire calamity, should feel inclined to help our fellow-citizens in Ireland.

Sir PATRICK O'BRIEN said, he had heard a good deal about the characteristic of regarding the industrial resources of the country which always marked a Conservative Government; but he thought, after the statement made by the Government as to their proposition for dealing with the present distress in Ireland, he should no longer hear the Conservative boast, with which Irish hustings had so long run, as to the beneficent intentions of the late Lord George Bentinck in 1846, relating to advancing millions of money to Irish railways. He would not imitate the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis) by indulging in personalities. In common, he believed, with all Irish Members of that House, he considered the question too grave for such a course, and he preferred to think of the welfare of the struggling people rather than of oratorical triumphs. He should vote for the Amendment in order to express his opinion that the conduct of the Government had been marked by inaction, and that they were not justified now in coming forward and appealing to the Irish Members for their support. Allusions had been made to the warning the Government had received, and to the large body of Irishmen of all Parties who had signed the Memorial to the Prime Minister; but there was one thing which they had all agreed in acknowledging—the conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough. In common with everyone who had spoken on the question, he would give his humble tribute of admiration to the conduct of that distinguished lady. He was sure there was no hon. Member present who would believe that a lady who hitherto took no part in politics, though connected with the highest circle of society, had adopted her present action of her own motion. He believed that the Duchess of Marlborough was put in motion by the Government, who, feeling that they had rather ridiculed the idea that there was any serious distress in Ireland, and finding out that they had been misinformed, did not do what they ought to have done, and what it was their duty to do — say—" We have been misinformed on this subject, and now, we know it, we, without asking the intervention of the Duchess of Marlborough, or the assistance of any body of Irish ladies, will come forward as a Government, and say that it is the duty of a Government, in cases where distress is impending over the land, to come forward and do our utmost to alleviate the distress." What had the Government done? They had relegated the question of private charity to a foreign country like America, and they had also published, through the agency of the Duchess, in the *Figaro* and the *Debats*, appeals to the French people of a similar sort; and then the Government came down now to Parliament, and told them that everything that was possible had been done. The Government said they were about to institute a new system, and that system was like the most of the systems introduced by the Government—namely, a system permissive in its character. The Government told them that the Irish landlords received little or no rent in the distressed districts; and, therefore, they would give the landlords an opportunity of increasing their liability by borrowing money under the Bill. Then, if that did not succeed, the Government said they would give power to call baronial sessions; but where were the baronial sessions to be called? They were only to be called in the distressed districts, and who were to pay the rates for the employment of the people? Why the persons so employed? This was what the Government proposed to do, and yet they said they had done everything that it was becoming a Government should do. He might not, perhaps, be justified in stating that starvation was rife in the country. [An hon. MEMBER: Hear, hear!] An hon. Gentleman gave an ironical cheer; but perhaps that hon. Member could recollect 1847? The deaths from fever in 1846, 1847, and 1848, no doubt outnumbered the cases of deaths from actual starvation; but it did not much matter to the poor people whether they died from starvation or fever. Was there any hon. Gentleman present who would venture to say that in consequence of the diminution of food in the distressed districts the seeds of fever had not been sown at this moment; and yet the remedy which the Government proposed for this state of things was to allow the landlords to borrow money which they would find it difficult to repay, and occupiers to borrow money to defray the charge of food of which they were to be recipients. With what justice, then, could he and other Irish Members be charged with factious conduct, when they denounced the action of the Government as being inadequate to the occasion? Coming, as they did, from the distressed country, and having the interests of its people at heart, they were simply pleading for them at a time when their lives were in danger. For his own part, if that were faction, he should glory in the accusation. The hon. and learned Member for Dublin University, who had made himself the apologist of the Government, gave the House the other evening a sketch of the history of Irish landlords; but would anyone who knew Ireland accept the case of Sir Arthur Guinness, with his country seat on the shore of Lough Corrib, as a case fairly illustrative of the class he undertook to describe? It was always rash to argue from particulars to generals, and that was what the hon. and learned Gentleman had done in dealing with that part of the subject. He looked with feelings of alarm on the action which the Government had determined to take. He was far from denying that abuses had arisen in Ireland in connection with public works; but who would venture to assert now that those abuses could not be prevented? There were many railways in an unfinished state, for example, which might be assisted. In his own county a line partially constructed might be completed and worked with great advantage; but it remained unfinished for want of funds. The House surely would not affirm the principle that, in a time of peril like this, those who asked for useful help for the people should be met by the economistic views of right hon. Gentlemen opposite. In a late debate in "another place," himself and hon. Gentlemen sitting near him had been stigmatized as disloyal to the Crown. That charge was made by no less a personage than the Prime Minister himself on the first night of the Session. On the part of the Gentlemen thus stigmatized, he indignantly repelled the imputation; and though they were beneath the Prime Minister in position and in dignity, he trusted they were his equals in honourable feeling. He knew the great abilities of the Prime Minister, his mastery of language, and the manner in which he could give utterance to incisive sentences; but he was astonished at the taunts in which he had thought proper to indulge. He (Sir Patrick O'Brien) humbly begged to say that the noble Earl should be more careful in his language. He recollected when Sir Robert Peel was charged by the noble Lord with having stolen the clothes of the Whigs; but in 1867 he had not hesitated to do the same, and when he read his speech he was reminded of the words of Montesquieu with regard to Cicero—"*Un beau génie, mais une âme souvent commune.*"

MR. BLENNERHASSETT said, he would not have ventured to intrude on the House but for the fact that he lived in a county where the present distress was felt with extreme severity. The whole of Kerry was affected by it, but especially the part where he lived. He approached this question with no desire to embarrass the Government, but every wish to assist them. Speaking from his local knowledge, he could not refrain from saying that the measures of the Government up to the present in dealing with the state of things in Kerry had been far from prompt or adequate to the occasion, and for that reason he should feel bound to vote for the Amendment. They had been told over and over again in the course of this debate that the Government had had full and ample warning of the impending distress, and he could assert with confidence that that was so in the county Kerry. In the extreme south-west of that county there was a wild, mountainous, boggy district of 200,000 acres, with a scattered population of over 20,000. A meeting was held in the principal town, representing all classes. The real state of affairs was placed before the Government, and remedies suggested in the shape of reproductive public works; but only the usual official response was received, and nothing had been done. Meanwhile, people had been starving and dying for months, although they might have been profitably employed in reclaiming an immense area of rich land now covered by the sea at high water. Had a railway been constructed in the district it would have added thousands a-year to the resources of the country. There were absolutely no sanitary works throughout a large part of the district, and no fewer than 37 per cent of the population lived in wretched hovels, which had not more than one door and one window. The consequence was that the people of that part of Ireland felt themselves in the position of having no Government to which they could appeal for relief in their distress; and although no actual deaths from starvation had been recorded as having occurred among them, still the constitutions of thousands among them had been so shattered by deprivation of adequate food and fuel that they would be sickly and miserable for the rest of their lives. It was only that morning that he had received letters stating that the old famine fever had broken out among them, and there was no telling where the pestilence would stop. It was idle for hon. Gentlemen to get up in this House and say that Government had done and were doing great things. Had it not been for the efforts of private individuals and charitable committees, he believed there would have been hundreds of deaths from actual starvation. For what the Government were going to do he gave his full acknowledgment. Those proposals had been so clearly and so fully considered that he would not dwell upon them, except to say that, listening just now to the speech of the First Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. W. H. Smith), he could not but come to the conclusion that he spoke like a man who had entirely failed to grasp the serious state of the case. Well disposed to the Irish people, and anxious to relieve their suffering, the right hon. Gentleman had misconceived and quite under-estimated the serious nature of the difficulties with which his Government had to deal. Moreover, the assistance given now would, to a great extent, come too late. Help should have been given throughout the winter, so as to enable the people to resume their ordinary farming duties in March and April; whereas now the Government assistance might do as much harm as good in tempting the people to neglect their tillage in order to earn money on the public works to meet their immediate necessities. He feared that even if seed potatoes were sent over to the country and offered at cost price the people would be too poor to buy them. He did not say that the Government were bound to make people rich. That would, indeed, be a foolish thing to assert. But he did say this most confidently—that when the condition of any people from year to year, and from age to age, was one of misery and poverty, those people were entitled to see that their misery and their poverty were not produced by artificial causes. The Chief Secretary had alluded to the agitation as the root of the present difficulty; but he had not indicated the secret of the agitators' power in the idleness and faithlessness of those who were bound to offer redress for grievances. As the right hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr. Gladstone) once said—"Take out of the hands of the agitator the weapon he wields, and out of his mouth the grievance he pleads." The state of Ireland had for centuries been a disgrace to civilization. The description given by Dean Swift in his *Short Account of Ireland* would apply to the present condition of that country, the truth being that it was intolerable, and could not be allowed to exist. All that a Government could do was to see that the industry and forethought of the people were not wasted by a vicious system. The Irish cottiers, it had been truly said, gained nothing by being industrious, because of the state of their land system; and although by a stroke of the legislative wand the accumulated evils of generations could not be removed, yet we ought to put them in a fair way of improvement by putting an end to that uncertainty of tenure which had crushed out the life and hope of the Irish tenant, and should provide by just measures for the restoration of the great mass of the people to the ownership of the soil. If the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham had been adopted there would now be in Ireland many thousands of persons owning the land which they cultivated, and the debt they incurred for the purchase of that land entirely, or almost entirely, swept away. In the case of adverse seasons, such persons would have a stock to fall back upon. One good result, he thought, would arise out of this debate—that the national conscience would be awakened to deal with this great and difficult question. He hoped the Government would deal with it properly, and that thinking men in this country would set their minds to work to deal with this deeply-rooted cause of distress; for if they did not do so the dark shadow of disaster would again and again sweep over Ireland.

SIR TOLLEMACHE SINCLAIR said, he thought it was about time the Home Rule Party should hear some home truths from the English and Scotch Members. Few of the latter had spoken in this debate, and he shared the dissatisfaction which many Members felt at the course the Irish Members took on the first night of the Session, in moving the adjournment of the debate at 10 o'clock. Such a course was unwarranted and unprecedented. The reason adduced for it at the time turned out not to be solid; for while it was stated that the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) had been put in possession of certain facts of the most material consequence to the debate, not a single fact had since been brought out which could not have been adduced equally well on the night in question. Now, as an independent Member, he said the Government was bound to nip the policy of obstruction in the bud. It had begun with the opening of the Session, and he believed that English and Scotch Members would no longer tolerate it, or allow the business affecting 26,000,000 of people to be thrown aside at the bidding of 5,000,000 or 6,000,000. Obstruction should be treated like the cattle disease—it should be stamped out. The Irish Members seemed to forget the small ratio of their population to that of the United Kingdom, and that they had no sort of right to more than a fair share of the time at the disposal of the House. It would be interesting to have a Return showing, on an average of the last three Sessions, how many hours out of the time at the disposal of Parliament had been devoted really to Public Business. Properly speaking, two-thirds of that time should have been devoted to Imperial questions, and one-third to local matters. Of that one-third a proportionate share should be allotted to Ireland, England, and Scotland, according to the amount they severally contributed to the Public Revenue. Then, if the Irish Members chose to take up more than their fair share of time, they should be restricted from bringing forward any further measures for the rest of the Session. The distress in Ireland appeared to him to be very much exaggerated. He had carefully read all the information he could obtain on the matter; and although, in some districts, the distress did appear to be severe, it was the exception and not the rule. He, for one, thought the measures of the Government were perfectly satisfactory, and fully adequate to the occasion. He considered, moreover, that the Government had in one respect gone a great deal too far. It was a monstrous injustice to English and Scotch landlords that Irish landlords, forsooth, were to have advances at 1 per cent, whilst those in England and Scotland had to pay 6½. He, for one, would certainly divide the House against such partiality and injustice. He would have no objection, considering the exceptional crisis, to allowing Irish landlords to have money at the same rate as the Funds—3 per cent. They would then be getting it at less than half what the English and Scotch landlords had to pay. The proposal of the Government in that respect was founded on a most unsafe policy. He would rather give Ireland £1,000 than lend them £2,000. Anyone who went into the Library, and looked at the statistics of Irish loans, would find that they were very often not repaid, and that hardly a year passed without large arrears of principal and interest having to be wiped off. That was especially the case with regard to loans for harbours of refuge, of which he had some experience. A great fuss was made by Irish Members about the landlords; but he could tell them the Land Laws of Ireland were infinitely more favourable to the tenant than the landlords of England and Scotland. The only vote he ever regretted giving in that House was his vote in favour of the second reading of the Irish Land Bill. He was ashamed of himself to think he was not found in the Lobby with the late right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxfordshire (Mr. Henley), who had the courage of his opinions, and voted against the principle of that Communistic and Socialistic measure. He could not conceive a greater piece of confiscation and folly than the granting of compensation for disturbance, and that, too, on a sliding scale, according to the size of the farms. If it was granted at all it ought to be on a uniform scale; but it was a most absurd principle altogether. A man in a mercantile business might be injured by having his possession disturbed; but what could it matter to a farm tenant whether he farmed one plot or another? It was generally understood that a great deal of the land in Ireland was held very much below its real value, on valuations made many years ago. If the tenants were rack-rented, he would like to know how it was that sums unknown in England and Scotland were paid for the goodwill of farms—in some cases, indeed, more than the fee simple of the land? This proved that the tenants were justly and liberally dealt with; and he, as a landlord, could not sit there and hear the Irish landlords abused without putting in a word. The Liberal Party was like the Empire of Japan, in having two leaders. They had their Mikado and their Tycoon—they had a Mayor of the Palace and an Emperor. With reference to the first, whom he would call the Mikado, the noble Lord the Member for the Radnor Boroughs, the nominal Leader, in writing to the Home Rule candidate for Liverpool, had expressed his opinion that the question of Home Rule was not a vital question. That certainly was not the opinion of 1 in 10, or 1 in 100, of the people of England. They held that the question of Home Rule was a vital question, and, moreover, that it was one that they would never consent to be even inquired into. He hoped and believed that the people of England and Scotland were just as determined to hold the Three Kingdoms together, one and indivisible, with one single Parliament, as the people of the Northern States of America were to hold the Southern and Northern States together; and, if necessary, they would take the same effectual means to insure that result as the Northern States took on that occasion. Ireland was a geographical expression. The Province of Ulster was as different from the rest of Ireland as Scotland was from England; and he would like to know what would become of Ireland if Ulster did not form part of it? A great deal had been said about Irish absentees. He had taken the trouble of looking into that question. He had seen in the Library the Returns procured at the instance, he thought, of the hon. Member for Westmeath. What was the result of the inquiry? So far from nearly every Irish proprietor being an absentee, only one-fifth of the soil was held by absentee proprietors. He was not at all clear that there were not as many absentees Scotch and English proprietors as Irish. Yet they never heard of any complaints, or of any threats being made by English or Scotch tenants upon the subject of absentees. Were the Irish landlords to be *adscripti glebæ*—tied to the soil? It was an Englishman's privilege to go where and to do what he liked, and it was equally the privilege of the Irish. Though he might be a resident proprietor in England, he certainly would not be a resident proprietor in Ireland. When hon. Members considered the little gratitude they received for their kindness, and the chance they had of assassination, he was only surprised that so many resided in the country. Now, as to the plan of establishing a peasant proprietary in Ireland, he wanted to know how it was that very few of the Irish, when they had an opportunity of buying the property of the landlords under the Bright Clauses of the Land Act, took advantage of it? A little boy might take a horse to the water, but a thousand men could not make him drink. He thought it would be as difficult to make the Irish tenant farmers buy their land. If the tenant farmers were to be assisted in buying the property of the landlords, he wanted to know what was to become of the labourers? Were they to be cut out, and to have no share of the plunder? If it was right to assist the tenant farmers to buy their land, by all means let the labourers have their share of it. What would be the consequence? From the year 1821 to 1841 the population of Ireland had increased by 1,500,000; and if they had gone on at the same rate of progress, Ireland would now have been like a human rabbit warren, with a population of something like 14,000,000. If we had now such difficulty in dealing with the distress amongst 5,500,000, what should we have done with 14,000,000? The Irish were notoriously unthrifty. They were bad farmers, and their climate was the least favourable to agriculture in the world. The land would soon, under the desired system, be sub-divided like Switzerland, where the soil looked very much like a chess-board—each small square with its proprietor. The population would in a short time be doubled or trebled, and what would happpen then? Famines were now rare. They would then become periodic and chronic. Reverting to Home Rule, although about three-fifths of the Irish Members were pledged to that principle, some of them very reluctantly, the other two-fifths repudiated it; and although its advocates were the most noisy of their countrymen, he was not sure that they had the majority of the population behind them. Moreover opinions must be weighed, and not heads counted merely; and he, for one, would put the brains of Ulster against those of any two other Provinces of Ireland. He rejoiced extremely that the Home Rule candidate had been defeated at Liverpool, and he thought that was the prevailing opinion of the people of the country, of Liberals as well as of Conservatives; and he said, further, that if the policy of their Leader was continued he would make certain the defeat of their Party at the next General Election, and insure the return of another Conservative majority. The question was one which the country would not allow to be tampered with. A candidate came forward who disapproved Home Rule, and because a word was altered he immediately turned round and promised to support an inquiry into it. The alteration of one word might seem a very little thing; but "Yes" might be put for "No," and he supposed that was about the difference in this case. During the last half-century everything had been done to satisfy the Irish without the slightest success. Until lately they paid no income tax or assessed taxes, and they had received far more than they had a right to in the shape of payment for the Constabulary and other matters. The grants we made to Ireland were enormous. The hon. Member for Edinburgh had gone into statistics he had moved for and obtained, and he had shown that Ireland had been most exceptionally and unfairly dealt with, to the prejudice of England and Scotland. It was impossible to satisfy the Irish. His father, as a Member of the House, knew Mr. O'Connell well, who once said to him—"Sir George, what is the use of the Whigs trying to conciliate us, as if we could be conciliated?" Another story of O'Connell's showed the perversity of the Irish character. A man was brought up on a charge of murder. O'Connell was his counsel, and he said—

> "I produced but one witness in favour of the accused; but that witness would in any other country in the world have carried conviction to the minds of the jury. That witness was the murdered man himself, and yet my client was brought in guilty."

There was a familiar saying that if they wanted to roast an Irishman they would always find another Irishman to turn the spit. He (Sir Tollemache Sinclair) did not care to conceal from the Irish his opinion of their country, and his opinion had been backed up by the course that Parliament had pursued. They had refused to allow the Irish to have Volunteers, and he thought very properly, because very soon their arms would be turned against each other, and like the Kilkenny cats, they would only leave the tail of one behind. He utterly disapproved of this Home Rule agitation. He believed that even the Irish Members had no sort of belief in it. The notorious demagogue Wilkes said—"I never was a Wilkite." He believed if they could dive into the secret hearts of many of the loudest advocates of Home Rule, they would be found to have no sort of belief in it. With reference to the ensuing Election, he hoped that both Liberals and Conservatives would be patriots, and, remembering that they were Britons, would not have recourse to such weapons as Home Rule. It ought to be understood that the use of the Home Rule weapon would be looked upon in the same light as would explosive bullets in modern warfare. He had nothing to gain or lose from the Home Rulers, and he took this opportunity of expressing his opinion of them.

MR. JOHN GEORGE MACCARTHY offered his sincere congratulations to the hon. Member who had just sat down on having afforded one of the finest arguments for Home Rule ever addressed to any assembly. Dealing with the most important question which had ever come before this Parliament, the hon. Member had not said one word on the subject of debate, but had treated the House to a series of observations on almost all conceivable topics, and had not touched on any one of them without blundering. [Sir TOLLEMACHE SINCLAIR said, he had touched on the Land Laws.] He could allow for the impulsive excitability of the hon. Gentleman. That a Gentleman holding his opinions, and having so little knowledge of Irish affairs, should have a vote upon them, was an argument in favour of the contention that the present arrangement of legislation ought to be most carefully considered. Turning to the subject under debate, he begged to remind the House that they were then discussing the gravest and most important subject that had engaged it attention since this Parliament was called into existence. It was, unhappily, no rhetorical exaggeration, but the calm and measured statement of the fact, to say that within a few hours' journey of where they sat, thousands of their fellow-subjects—men in the prime of manhood, mothers surrounded by their little children, and maidens in the bloom of their innocent beauty—were suffering the pangs of hunger. It was greatly to be feared that, unless Government took care, they would let those people die of starvation, or of the diseases which starvation brings in its train. He was not guilty of the wild injustice of suggesting that Government would do this deliberately; but what he did say was—they were governing a country they did not know, and, in disregarding the advice of its Constitutional Representatives, they were incurring a terrible responsibility. In his admirable biography of Lord George Bentinck, the Prime Minister tells how, previous to the Famine of 1847, O'Connell dragged his tottering limbs to that Table and raised his dying voice to warn the House that a great calamity was approaching, and to point out the measures that would prevent its occurrence. The warning was neglected; the Famine came; the people perished in hundreds of thousands; the saddest page in the history of Victoria's reign was written, and the remedies which O'Connell suggested are to this hour neglected. Surely this was an experience worthy of the consideration of thoughtful and honourable men. Hitherto the House seemed scarcely to have considered the subject at all, and he lamented the want of interest in the question the House had shown. His hon. and gallant Friend the junior Member for Cork County (Colonel Colthurst), in one of the most touching speeches he had heard in that House, gave an account of what within a few days he personally had seen of the distress in Skull and other parts of his own county. There were not 10 hon. Members who condescended to listen to that statement. His hon. and learned Friend the Member for Kildare (Mr. Meldon), in a singularly lucid and well-considered speech, gave the results of his experience as an Irish proprietor, and his reflections as an Irish Member, to an audience of three Members. When the House was full it seemed only to care for personal controversy and half-jocular banter. The news of the Liverpool election seemed the other night to excite hon. Gentlemen opposite to a spirit of the most tremendous exhilaration, in which the slightest joke created bursts of laughter. It was very sad that the tale of Irish distress, which was awakening sympathy all round the world, should, when related with simple earnestness by the Representatives of the Irish people, be told to empty Benches, or disregarded in the excitement of some trumpery borough election. His hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dublin University (Mr. Plunket) had been, as he always was, most brilliant, and his sallies had aroused the enthusiasm of the House. If most excellent chaff would supply the place of wheat, then the hon. and learned Gentleman by the end of July, and that no money was to be advanced for any works which would not be completed by that date. In some way or other the Government had got it into its head that the famine was to come to an end in February, and any loans which were made must be expended before August. [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: No.] He was very glad to hear the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer say he was wrong, because it would be impossible to make railways in the time fixed by the Government. The railways could not possibly be completed by the time the Government had fixed for the famine to cease. He should wish to see the Government encourage every well-intentioned effort to give remunerative employment to the people; and when a great Railway Company offered to make a short line of railway that was much wanted, the Government ought, in his opinion, to have accepted the proposal with alacrity. There was a great necessity in many districts for increased railway communication. The town of Clifden, of which he had before spoken as being in a state of great distress, was 48 miles from the nearest railway station. In a village with which he was acquainted in Connemara, the pig-jobbers had to drive pigs, which were bought in thousands, 38 or 40 miles before reaching a railway, and it was in the districts which were 40 or 50 miles from railways that the greatest distress existed. He would illustrate the loss sustained by the pig-breeders by the case of a man who had seven pigs. In his own district he was offered £23 for them on the spot; but he drove them about 30 miles to the railway, and there realized £29. The absence of railway accommodation in this case entailed, in effect, a direct loss of £6, or upwards of 17*s.* on each pig, probably enough to pay a half-year's rent. That was a great loss to the poor tenant, and yet the Government which could govern a great Empire could not find any mode consistently with economical science to assist in the arterial development of a country by means of railways. Another plan which he would urge upon the Government was the reclamation of waste lands. He had done a little in this way in the West of Ireland, to which he had been attached by a love of fishing. The plan which he had adopted for the reclamation of the waste land had succeeded well. Nothing was required but to drain off the water from the bog, and to put lime upon the peat; they thus obtained the most fertile soil in the world. That substance could not, however, be done without. When he first went to the West of Ireland it was so wild that he had to send down wooden huts and preserved meats; but he became attached to the place he rented, and ultimately bought a large tract of land. Like the hon. Baronet the Member for Dublin, he had never interfered with the rentals of the estate, which were small, and he spent many times their amount in giving employment. He did not take any credit for that, for, having a taste for agriculture, he had spent his money in that pursuit to amuse himself; and he might, perhaps, have spent it in horse-racing. But he did not do so from any notion of benevolence—it was simply his hobby. He was glad to say that now the waste place blossomed like a garden. The Royal Agricultural Society sent down their Commissioner to the district, and *The Times* Correspondent had also visited it. The remarks of *The Times* Correspondent he had supplemented, because he wished to show the English people what could be done by anyone who engaged in this reproductive work of developing a waste Irish estate. There were in Ireland parts of the Empire which had never been touched. Let it not be supposed that the money spent would be, as it was said, thrown into the bog. It would come back 10, 20, and 40-fold. Only let the Government cease to look upon Ireland as the battle-ground of a Party. Let them regard Ireland in an economical light, and as an undeveloped estate. Let them bring forward well-considered and wise plans for the development of Ireland, and he was convinced that every shilling invested would return ten-fold in interest and capital. Not a single penny should be expended in waste. The Government that did that would solve half the problem of Irish discontent; for half the reason for Irish discontent was to be found in the words "Irish hunger." With those words he would conclude, thanking the House for the attention which it had shown him.

MR. W. E. FORSTER said, he had listened with painful interest to the remarks of the hon. Member for Galway

(Mr. Mitchell Henry) with regard to the prevailing distress in some parts of Ireland. The hon. Gentleman had told a very sorrowful story which must have touched them all; and he (Mr. W. E. Forster) quite agreed with the hon. Member, when he said that so serious was the state of affairs that the Government should at once undertake to deal with it. He did not say that he agreed with the hon. Member in every one of his inferences; but the hon. Member had given many facts which no doubt the Government would feel compelled to answer. He could not help joining with the hon. Member in his expression of surprise that the Chief Secretary for Ireland was not present. It was true the right hon. Gentleman had spoken in the debate; but every Member of the Government could not be so fully acquainted as the Chief Secretary for Ireland with the facts. Besides, it was known that the debate would be opened by the hon. Member for Galway, who had practical knowledge of the subject and was the Representative of the district in which the greatest distress existed, and he (Mr. W. E. Forster) should have thought that the Irish Secretary would have felt it to be his duty to attend. He (Mr. W. E. Forster) supposed that what had been stated would be replied to by some Member of Her Majesty's Government; but he thought they were not in a very comfortable position in the matter, because the House generally did not know who was really responsible in the Cabinet for the government of Ireland at the present juncture. At present, neither the Lord Lieutenant nor the Chief Secretary were there represented; and he had no doubt but that generally both Officers, as the Chiefs of Irish affairs, paid full attention to all ordinary matters arising. But in the present great crisis, when the Government had to deal with widespread distress in Ireland, he thought that there should be at least one Cabinet Minister responsible for the state of that country. He agreed that it was fortunate that the debate did not terminate on Friday night, considering the exciting conditions, consequent, to some extent, on an event which happened "elsewhere." As he was the first Member who had spoken from that Bench, he must be allowed to notice one or two remarks made on Friday. It seemed to amuse hon. Members opposite to take the opportunity of charging his noble Friend (the Marquess of Hartington) with being more or less a Home Ruler in disguise, because he thought it right to wish success to a candidate not in favour of Home Rule, but in favour of voting for an inquiry as to the reason why Home Rule was demanded. It might be interesting and amusing to Members on his side of the House to ask why, if this inquiry was such an unpardonable offence, it was that the Government had appointed an hon. Member respected by everyone in the House, who sat on the Conservative side, and who seconded the Motion for the Home Rule inquiry, to the very high political and social position of Lord Lieutenant of his county? He dare say his noble Friend would make some remarks on this subject before the debate was over; he merely wished to say this—that he did not think there was much reality in either of the charges. Both sides were able to defend themselves. It was well known that the immense majority of the Members of that House were opposed to Home Rule and that inquiry; but there was also a very general feeling that the opposition to Home Rule was only a greater reason why they should give the utmost attention to Irish Members when they brought forward such a matter as Irish distress. When he recollected what Irish distress was 35 years ago, he could not look with much patience on Party attacks from either side in a debate dealing with this question now. The question was—"Is there likely to be a famine in Ireland, and, if so, have the Government done their best to ward it off?" That was the chief question they had to consider, and he regretted the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) did not confine his Resolution to that. The Resolution was not very clear; but he understood it to cover three things—a Vote of Censure on the Government for not having taken adequate steps to ward off the horrors of famine; secondly, a pledge to take into immediate consideration the question of land tenure; and, lastly, an expression of the belief of the House that the present position of land tenure was the true cause of dissatisfaction and distress in Ireland. The last two questions were of great importance, and it was impossible to overrate them; but the first was of such overpowering importance that he thought the House ought to have been asked to vote on that would be a benefactor to his people. But when roars of merriment were being excited in that House he was thinking of the poor people starving at home. He would ask leave to lay before the House some of the facts of the case; and, first, as to the statistics of the potato crop. For the three years 1874-6, the total produce of the Irish potato crop was 11,219,274 tons; for the three following years, 1877-9, it was only 5,397,455 tons, the deficiency amounting to 5,821,819 tons. Sixty shillings per ton was a fair average value, and at this rate the loss for the last three years amounted to £17,465,457, a sum greater than a year's valuation of all the agricultural land in Ireland. But this was not all. In 1859 there were 2,637,500 acres of cereals; in 1879 there were only 1,761,800, showing a decrease of nearly 33 per cent for the 20 years. Even in the number of milch cows there had been a falling off during the same period of 250,000. To summarize, there had been a total falling off in the value of Irish crops amounting to over £10,000,000 sterling as between the years 1878 and 1879. That meant a falling off of 30 per cent of the total valuation of agricultural land. Another indication was supplied by the Returns furnished by the Registrar General of the bank deposits. In 1876 they amounted to £69,906,030; in 1879 they were only £66,260,000, showing a falling off of no less than £3,646,030. They might also trace the same results in the details of Irish life. And first as to Poor Law relief. Nothing was more characteristic of Irish life than the disinclination of the people to go into the poorhouse. They would often rather die than enter the workhouse. Nevertheless, they found that in the last week of 1879 there was the enormous multitude of 98,151 persons in Ireland accepting such relief, being a vaster population than that of some sovereign States. But, of course, the greatest and saddest results are those outside the workhouses. Take the borough of Mallow. The week before last there were 450 families, or more than 2,000 men, women, and children, in a state of destitution. In the City of Cork, facing his own doors, he had seen troops of silent, sad, able-bodied men, with the look of hunger in their faces, standing drearily under the drenching rain, and responding to inquiries with the melancholy answer—"We have nothing to eat, and we have nothing to do." His hon. and gallant Friend the junior Member for Cork County had told them that a few days ago he found in East and West Skull 600 families, representing 3,000 individuals, on the verge of starvation, without food, without money, without credit, and without work. In Mill Street 900 families, representing 4,500 persons, were on the relief books. In Drumcollegher, the Correspondent of *The Cork Herald* reports—

> "That no words can give any idea of the destitution here. Respectable householders who a short time since relieved distress, are now paupers in turn, and the cry everywhere is hunger! hunger! hunger!"

But even that was nothing to the destitution in the West. Take the account of the parish of Carnagh, in Tipperary, from the able Correspondent of *The Freeman's Journal*:—

> "With a couple of dozen exceptions, the whole teeming populations, 1,814 families, numbering some 5,000 souls, are on the high road to death by starvation. Hunger overtakes one-third of them or more already. The local relief committee, presided over by a Protestant gentleman of much local usefulness and popularity, Mr. Hazel, and re-inforced by the Protestant rector, as well as by the Catholic priests, have made house-to-house collections, according to which, of 36 families in the townland of Loughconiere there are 21 at this moment wanting food, 25 families out of the 57 in Kilsallagh, 23 families of 28 in Rusheen and Drenagh, 20 families out of 35 in Alnabrine, 27 families out of 29 in Bonroughard, and so on through the miserable bead-roll. This is but the beginning. The remainder are living upon their seed potatoes. Every day some family is eating their last meal of them. Hardly anybody any longer enjoyed their meals a day, even of rotten dwarf potatoes. Two meals a day are now the average allowance. Numbers that I have met squat in their hideous cabins around a morsel of live turf all day long in order not to awaken the pangs of hunger by active exercise, and think themselves happy if the Bohan-a-tighe has been able to beg or borrow a few pounds of Indian meal that they may not go supperless to bed. And of the patience, the endurance, the self-sacrifice of those wretched mothers who stumble over miles of sharp-pointed rocks with their bare feet to implore that miserable meal for their whining children, who carry loads of turf or dripping seaweed on their backs for 10 or 15 miles, like beasts of burden, who alone in those little doomed households seem to have heart or hope left in them."

Unhappily, there were some whom all the power of the Queen's Majesty and all the wealth of the country could not save. He would conclude by imploring the Government to deal with this great subject in a bold and statesmanlike spirit. As to what they had promised, he, for one, fully concurred in everything, believing it to be most excellent; but he believed it to be all inadequate. He warned the Government that they did not realize the greatness of the distress, and that the danger was greater than they imagined; and he respectfully pointed out that, having undertaken to govern a country of which their knowledge must necessarily be more or less imperfect, they would incur a terrible responsibility if they declined to take the advice of the Constitutional Representatives of the Irish people, who spoke of what they knew when they said that a great calamity was approaching; that the danger was greater and vaster than was supposed; and if it were not boldly met the consequences would be terrible indeed. By all means let the Government propose to give out-door relief if it was grievously wanted; it should not be delayed one day. By all means let them endeavour to promote, as far as possible, reproductive works. They had done something in that direction: let them continue to do so. He had endeavoured to help them, and he believed that on his recommendation some extensive public works were in progress. But when the time for husbandry had passed the real difficulty commenced; and he suggested that the Government should be prepared with great public works, such as the reclamation of land and arterial drainage, which were works that Sir Robert Peel said nothing but Imperial resources could accomplish. The fishery question was also well worthy of attention, for it would be most desirable to supplement the bad harvest of the land by the rich harvest of the sea. In his own county, all along the coast there were great public works, both affording employment and conferring great benefit on the community. Let the Government take up the question of great public works in a truly statesmanlike spirit, and thus possibly they might avert the great danger threatening Ireland, and prevent another dark and dreary page being written in the history of Queen Victoria's reign.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that two distinct subjects which ought to have been kept separate had been confused one with the other in the course of the debate—namely, the question of the immediate distress and the question of land tenure—and he was of opinion that it would be more convenient to discuss the latter question on some future occasion. With regard to the first question, he was not inclined to join in so strong a measure as a Vote of Censure upon the Government, a step which the evidence before the House hardly justified, as it had not yet been shown that the arrangements proposed by the Government were inadequate or had failed, or that they had neglected their duty up to the present. With regard to the future, however, the responsibility rested with the Government; and he, for one, would not be willing to relieve them of it. He thought the Papers showed that in some respects already the arrangements of the Government had not been productive of the results anticipated. He found, for instance, that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, writing to the Treasury on January 10, and referring to a previous letter, dated November 22, stated that the arrangements made then had not been sufficient to meet the emergencies of the case. Upon the showing of the Government themselves, therefore, six weeks had elapsed during which practically nothing had been done. They had yet to know what would be the result of the arrangements made on January 10; and, as no opinion could at present be formed as to the result, he should refrain from supporting the Amendment before the House. He desired to point out to the House that the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on Friday disclosed a much more serious state of things than they had up till then any idea of, for he said that the Registrar General's Report upon the harvest showed that there was a deficiency for the whole of Ireland of no less than one-third, or £10,000,000. But this was not the worst of the case, because the distress had practically fallen on about one-third of the area of Ireland, so that the loss of that sum had been incurred by but a small part of the country. Therefore, enormous as those losses were, so must their pressure be the greater, confined, as they were, within a certain specified area. He presumed also that the Chancellor of the Exchequer in this estimate did not take into account the loss consequent upon the failure of the peat harvest, nor that due to the want of work in England and Scotland. About 30,000 labourers from the West and South of Ireland made their way every year into the two countries, returning to Ireland at the end of the season with from £8 to £10 earned; but this year, in consequence of the lateness and badness of the harvest, they had carried nothing back to their homes, a circumstance to which the fact was, in great measure, due that the present distress had fallen so heavily on the small cottier class. In this way a sum of about £250,000 had been kept out of the pockets of the poorer classes of the country. It was certain, then, that from an early date in the autumn the tenants in the West of Ireland must have been fully aware of their condition, and must have known that they could not get through the year without assistance from the workhouse, and that such assistance would be absolutely refused, if they did not give up possession of their land. While the organs of public opinion in England were telling the people of this country so late as a month ago that there was no distress in Ireland, and that if any did exist it was much exaggerated, the Papers now showed that the Government were likewise in total ignorance of the state of Ireland until the 28th of October, when they received information from the Local Government Board. He would now ask the House to consider with him the state of the Irish Poor Law. In it there was a statutory prohibition refusing out-door relief to any holder of land of the extent of a quarter of an acre. This rule he considered a very harsh and cruel one in times of great distress, and it should be borne in mind that the Local Government Board in Dublin had no power to issue orders dispensing with its application. The English law on the subject was much more favourable to the class for whom these laws were intended, because the Local Government Board could at any moment dispense with any regulation as to out-door relief. As late as the 14th November the Government had determined to maintain this prohibition. On that date the Chief Secretary for Ireland, writing to the Secretary to the Treasury, said the Lord Lieutenant considered that gratuitous distribution to the able-bodied population would be productive of serious injuries. In consequence of this opinion, a Circular was issued to the Guardians, calling upon them to be prepared for an extra pressure, and they were to have their wards "thoroughly cleansed and whitewashed!" Even, then, so late as the 14th of November, the people of Ireland were informed that there would be no relaxation of the law, and that they would be driven into the workhouses for relief. Since then the House had been informed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that before the meeting of Parliament the Government had determined to relax the restriction. But why was that intention not indicated at an earlier date? It would have given some measure of relief and assurance to the public mind that the Government were aware, in reality, of the extent of the evil, and knew well what were the remedies best adapted for meeting it. It appeared to him that at a very early period in the distress the Government ought to have relieved the minds of the people of Ireland by informing them that out-door relief would be dispensed where it was found to be necessary; for, whatever might be the merit of the prohibition in ordinary times, there could be no doubt that it operated with great harshness in a time of emergency such as the present, and those poor people who were severely visited by the distress which prevailed ought, he thought, to be enabled to receive relief without giving up their land and homes. Looking at the position of those tenants from another point of view, he wished to point out that, under one of the clauses of the Irish Land Act, the non-payment of rent constituted an absolute bar to compensation on ejectment which, in ordinary times, they would be entitled to, and that that too, which might be a very wise provision in a general way, served to bear very heavily during a period of scarcity, when it was almost impossible for the tenant to pay his rent. The position in which the tenant was thus placed appeared to him to be a most serious one. On the one hand, he could not obtain relief without entering the workhouse; on the other hand, if to save himself from starvation he did not pay rent, he was liable to ejectment without compensation. The position was one which he could not help thinking might, to a great extent, have led to the agitation which commenced in the early part of the autumn. The Government could, in his opinion, have done a great deal to alleviate the state of alarm and terror which then existed. It was, he maintained, somewhat discreditable to the officials in Dublin that they were not able to anticipate at the time the probable extent of the impending crisis. But even in the absence of information from the Local Government Board in Ireland the Government might have acted on general information, and might have foreseen that famine was about to spread over a large portion of that country. In England there was a very bad harvest, but the Government seemed to be alive to the state of things here as early as September; for the Prime Minister, speaking at Aylesbury on the 15th of that month, described at length the unfortunate circumstances of the country, and he made an appeal to the landlords present and throughout the country generally to the effect that, looking to the very serious state of the harvest, it was absolutely essential that rents should be reduced. His Lordship's words were these—

> "I say that I believe the landlords of England are prepared to do their duty on this occasion; but what I want to impress upon those who are present and those who are not present in this hall is, that it is of vital importance that they should thoroughly comprehend the state of things."

He went on to say that a 10 per cent reduction might, in some cases, be a very agreeable Christmas-box if it came in time, but that he knew of many cases in which such a reduction would be utterly insufficient to meet the circumstances. Now, he (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) should like to know why some action of that kind had not been taken with respect to Ireland, seeing that the Earl of Beaconsfield's remarks applied only to Ireland? He could not but think that if in September the Lord Lieutenant or some responsible Minister of the Crown had used language of a similar kind with regard to Ireland to that which the noble Earl (the Earl of Beaconsfield) had employed in reference to England, it would have been a great relief to the minds of many of the smaller tenants in the West and South of Ireland, and might have prevented a great deal of the agitation that had taken place. The Irish people might also have been re-assured in a great measure if something had been said on the question of land tenure. He had last Session moved a Resolution on that subject, which pledged the Government and the House, in the strongest language, to legislate without delay in such a manner as to afford a considerable number of tenants in Ireland the opportunity of becoming the owners of their holdings by purchase, in cases where those estates were sold in the Landed Estates Court. That Resolution was passed as early as the month of May; but nothing was done by the Government during the remainder of the Session, and during the Recess nearly every Minister who had spoken had taken the opportunity of discouraging any idea that it would be acted upon. The noble Earl (the Earl of Beaconsfield), in the speech at Aylesbury, denounced a peasant proprietary, and enlarged upon his theory of the three profits and the absolute necessity for there being three classes to divide betweeen them the three profits. The noble Duke (the Duke of Richmond and Gordon) at Chichester, the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury) at Hertford, and the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty at Westminster, had all condemned the whole scheme of peasant proprietorship, the last-named saying he would never support it, as he believed it to be only a sham. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland had opened his mouth on more than one occasion, and had expressed his disapproval of it. Therefore, it was only natural that the people of Ireland should come to the conclusion that they had nothing to expect from the Government on the question of land tenure. He (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) judged that the Government did not intend to propose any measure on the subject during the Session. If he were right in that opinion, he gave Notice that he would take an early opportunity of bringing the subject before the House. He might, however, remark that the Chief Secretary for Ireland was entirely mistaken in supposing, as he said on Friday last, that the scheme of peasant proprietorship was put forward as a remedy for the existing distress. Nobody had ever propounded so foolish a doctrine. All that had been advocated in that direction was that, if property in Ireland were more distributed, and there were a larger number of small ownerships, there would be greater stability, greater incentives to industry would be held out, and that in future the people would be in a better position to encounter a period of famine. He wished, in the next place, to say a few words on what had fallen from his hon. and learned Friend the Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Plunket) on Friday night. His hon. and learned Friend had given the House some very interesting details of a property, inhabited by a class of very small tenants, of whom the hon. Baronet the senior Member for Dublin (Sir Arthur Guinness) was the landlord. His hon. and learned Friend spoke of the very generous conduct of the landlord to those tenants, and asked whether it could be believed that they would be better off as peasant proprietors than as living under such a landlord. Well, if all Irish landlords were of the character of the hon. Baronet in question, he thought they would hear very little of discontent in Ireland; but, unfortunately, they could not conclude that that was so. If they were to judge by the evidence given before the Committee of two years ago, there were many Irish landlords of a totally different character, and among them were those smaller proprietors who had purchased their estates in the Landed Estates Court. Judge Flanagan, who was at the head of that Court, gave evidence to the effect that those landlords were among the most exacting to be found in the country, and between that class and such landlords as his hon. and learned Friend had spoken of there was every variety, and many of them, so far as Ireland was concerned, were conspicuous by their absence. He was himself well acquainted with the class of tenants to which his hon. and learned Friend had alluded, having lived among them in some of the wildest parts of Mayo; and he could say that they were not a sample of the whole tenantry of Ireland. They were a numerous, but they were also an exceptional class; they were not, he admitted, the class among whom ownership would spread most readily or easily; and he remembered that in the Committee his hon. and learned Friend was in favour of giving such tenants perpetuity grants as an alternative for any scheme for making them peasant proprietors, and carried a proposition to that effect. He wished to take that, the earliest opportunity he had had of speaking since the Recess, of saying he had no sympathy with those who advocated the expropriation of landlords. No proposition of that kind, or to that extent, had come before the Committee two years ago. Still less could he sympathize with those who made a boast that by their agitation they had so reduced the value of property as to make easier the carrying out of a scheme of peasant proprietary. With such a view he could have no sympathy. He thought it a dishonest one, and one not likely to further the object in behalf of which it was put forward. They could only proceed in a desirable direction by a full recognition of the rights of property; and he, for one, had always advocated that full recognition. As he had said, he could not sympathize with the views expressed in favour either of the expropriation of landlords or of the compulsory reduction of rents. He felt that if Her Majesty's Government were determined not to propose a measure on the subject of land tenure in Ireland this Session, he should have great difficulty in forcing them to do so. In his action during the sitting of the Committee two years ago, and in proposing and carrying the Resolution of last year, he had brought the horse to water, but he could not make it drink. If the Government declined to take further action in the matter he did not see how they could be forced to do so. He might, however, be allowed to suggest to Her Majesty's Government that, as he could not make them bring in a Bill upon the subject of the Land Laws of Ireland, an inquiry into the distress existing in Ireland and its cause, and how it could best be averted in future, might with advantage be separated from the inquiry into agricultural depression in England. The Royal Commissioners had hardly as yet commenced their operations. They had appointed Assistant Commissioners, who were instituting inquiries; but they had hardly as yet met themselves for the transaction of business. When they did they would certainly have as much on their hands as they could get through without undertaking the case of Ireland. The Irish case was totally different, and he trusted Her Majesty's Government would consider his suggestion that a separate Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into it. If his request were granted, the Commission could inquire whether the Resolution passed last Session by the House of Commons could be carried out. His right hon. Friend the Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster) had asked who was the Cabinet Minister responsible for Irish Business, and the First Lord of the Admiralty had replied that the whole Cabinet were responsible. That, however, could not well be. What was everyone's business was nobody's business, and they remembered that in former days the Home Secretary was the Minister charged with responsibility for Irish Business. As, however, the present Home Secretary never took part in Irish debates, he supposed they might assume that he was not now the responsible Minister of those affairs. He hoped they would hear before the debate closed from some Member of the Government who was the special Minister that in the present Cabinet was so responsible.

Sir GEORGE BOWYER wished to state his reasons for opposing the Amendment. An hon. Member had complained that Ireland was made the battle-field of Party. But who had made it the battle-field of Party but the agitators who disturbed it? One great cause of distress in Ireland was the want of capital there. There was an enormous amount of land which capital would make beaming with prosperity; but capital was a sensitive thing, it wanted peace and tranquillity, the security of life and property, and these things could not be obtained in Ireland so long as agitation prevailed. The consequence was, no one would invest money in that country. He did not wish to be misunderstood. He did not say that some of the agitators had not honourable objects in view; that they had not before them the good of the country; but he maintained that history showed they were grievously mistaken. The Resolution was somewhat incoherent, and in some parts it was not intelligible. He could not vote for it. It declared that the Government had failed to take adequate steps for meeting the distress; but he could not concur in this view when he saw the Papers which had been laid before the House. There might, no doubt, be a difference of opinion as to the action of the Government; but they must allow to every Government a certain margin. The Government acted under its responsibility to Parliament, and unless they had the information which the Government had they must not condemn it unheard. He believed the Government had done the best it could in the past, and had taken every measure to meet the distress which prudently could be taken in the circumstances by prudent and viligant men. So far from there having been any apathy on their part in the matter, they had stretched a point and actually transgressed the law in order that the sufferers might be taken care of, having to ask Parliament to pass a Bill of Indemnity. What was the use, he would remind hon. Members, of harrowing the feelings of the House with the sufferings of the people? What they ought to do was to suggest a remedy. The Resolution dealt with the tenure of land. Small tenancies, he held, should come naturally, and not as the result of legislation. A man might accumulate money to the amount of millions; was there any reason why he should not increase his holding of land? The misfortune was that those who talked most about the Land Laws of England, especially the Laws of Entail and Settlement, had betrayed their ignorance of the subject. The right hon. Member for Greenwich and the right hon. Member for Birmingham had never spoken upon them without showing, generally, a practical ignorance which might be corrected in the chamber of a conveyancer or the office of a solicitor. He was far from saying that the Land Laws of Ireland might not be susceptible of improvement; but still that must be done with caution, for they were based on the same fundamental principles as the law of landlord and tenant in England and all civilized countries. That was to say, the land was let to the tenant under contract to cultivate it and to pay rent, and, as a rule, there was fixity of tenure. Nothing so monstrous as wholesale eviction could practically occur. The landlord could not now, as formerly, get the tenant to make improvements and then turn him out, if he would not pay higher rent. The eviction of improving tenants was rendered difficult, if not impossible, by the obligation to pay the value of their improvements. In that respect the law gave a better remedy to the tenant in Ireland than to the tenant in England. Land laws must be based on the same principles in all civilized countries, and they must be consonant with the laws on which all society depended. If the tenant was not to pay the rent which he was able to pay, the principle would be found capable of general application, and if he was yet to continue to hold his land the debtor would repudiate his obligations, and society would be overturned. He hoped the people of Ireland would see before it was too late the danger to which they were exposed in ignoring the principle of contract between man and man, and would recognize the maintenance of that principle as essential to their individual and collective prosperity.

MR. SYNAN said, that his hon. and learned Friend opposite (Sir George Bowyer) said that if a man could pay his rent and did not he was guilty of an offence against society, and he agreed with him; but what if a man was not able to pay, and then was put out of his farm? In that case his ejection might be a great wrong. In this case "your 'if' is a great peacemaker." His hon. and learned Friend had, no doubt, had good reason for taking the views he did; and he voted for the Government on every question, whether Irish or otherwise, and seemed to have abandoned Home Rule for reasons best known to himself. The difficulty the Irish Members were in was that they were opposed not only by the Government, but by the front Opposition Bench, and the hon. and learned Member, who was equal to a bench himself. The Opposition, were, however, suffering under two misapprehensions. First, they misunderstood the Amendment itself, and, secondly, its object. The Amendment did not say that the Government did not take steps to prevent the famine. It did no such thing; but what it said was that the Government, although they had timely information and warning, had not taken adequate steps to meet promptly and efficaciously the severe distress existing and increasing in Ireland. What it alleged against the Government was culpable *laches*, after notice had been given them from time to time. When did the Irish Local Government Board know the state of distress which existed in Ireland? It was not famine yet; but it might lead to famine in 1881 or 1882, through the inaction and inactivity of the Government. Why, Her Majesty's Ministers had wasted time, and he defied any Member on the Treasury Bench to get up and say that they had done all that could possibly be done. On the 5th of September the Local Government Board of Ireland knew that the rates in several Unions in Ireland were 4*s.* 5*d.* in the pound, and that the paupers receiving out-door relief had increased to 7,515, or 11·2 per cent of the pauper population of the country. It was not until the 28th of October, however, that they took any step, and all they did then was to inform the Government that the potato crop, the staple food-crop of the people, was not more than one-half its ordinary quantity—an estimate which had since proved excessive. The Government then had before them Dr. Hancock's statistics, and knew what would be the result of that communication. The consequence was, wages were not forthcoming, and food and fuel ran out. The next step taken was on the 14th of November, when the Irish Government told the English Government that the landlords could do nothing, as they were not getting their rents; and what was the action of the English Government upon that? The answer was given that Parliament alone could act. In other words, they were not alive to the necessities of the case. What was the next step taken? On the 22nd of November the Irish Board of Works gave, through their Secretary, the terms on which loans would be made to the landlords. How long did it take after an application before the first instalment could be received? Four, five, six, or even eight weeks. On the 10th of January the Irish Government complained that the landlords would not take any loans under the Circular of the 22nd of November. On the 12th of January the Treasury resolved to issue a new Circular offering more favourable terms under which loans were to be made. It was true that £200,000 had been applied for under the terms of the new Circular; but the time between the 22nd of November and the 12th of January was lost. If the people in the distressed districts had been employed during that time, their wages would have enabled them to save seed for this year's sowing, and there would have been no need to bring in a Bill to supply them with seed. But the Government were waiting to see what private charity would do. Two funds were started—the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund and the Mansion House Fund—and between both about £60,000 had been collected and £30,000 distributed. Was it possible that a Government like that of England was waiting to see what private charity would do, and was allowing the begging-box to be sent to Australia and America to save the great and wealthy English Treasury? No doubt they had been spending money in wars, and he was surprised they did not send the begging-box to South Africa to see how much of the £6,000,000 they could get there. The first bad effect of the inaction of the Government, therefore, was that the people remained for two months unemployed, and were obliged to live on seed that was necessary for future crops. It was, therefore, inactivity, not crime, that was charged against the Government. The next thing alleged in the Amendment was that in the Speech from the Throne, which disclosed the policy of the Government, there was no measure recommended for the prevention of future famines in Ireland. No proposal was made to avert future famines, and he was surprised to find that neither of the front Benches had a permanent remedy to apply. It was the duty of the Government in a case like this, when the distress at present felt might so extend that in six months it might reach the dimensions of a famine, to say what measures they were prepared to take by way of permanent remedy. He could understand it if the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that as this was the seventh Session, and they might dissolve in a month or two, no important measure could be introduced. But what the right hon. Gentleman said was that the question of a permanent remedy was beside the question before the House, which was how the present distress was to be relieved. Did the Government wish to provoke the Irish Party by their inaction, and, if not, why did they not propose to legislate on the question in a permanent manner? The truth was, they were there for electioneering purposes, and not for legislating, and that was the only construction that could be placed upon their conduct. The whole question ought to have been dealt with long since. In one century Spenser, in another Temple, had told of old Irish famines, and yet in our times famines had occurred with unprecedented frequency and severity. Whether the report was true or false, it was said that there had been three deaths from famine at Parsonstown in King's County, another in county Cork, and another in Mayo. He could not vouch for the facts; but they had been asserted in the public journals. In any case, the miserable condition of the people could not be denied; and he asked whether the House was satisfied that the Government had done its duty? It would be necessary to go to the root of the matter, otherwise Relief Bills and Seed Potato Bills would be utterly useless. Looking at the unhappy facts of the case, he could not help thinking the proposals of the Government thoroughly inadequate; and they would only tend, as did the proposals at the time of the last famine, to demoralize the Irish people. It was not politic to employ men as suggested by the Government proposal upon public works during the spring, when they should be engaged upon agricultural pursuits. It was proposed by the Government to limit the obtaining of loans to February 28, which would have the very effect which should be prevented. Money was to be lent to landlords of whom it was well known that very few were willing to encumber their estates further by borrowing, and the scheme for the construction of great public works was in another way equally objectionable. He should be surprised if that plan received the assent of the House, though the uncertain sound given forth from the front Opposition Benches made it difficult for him to know what to expect. The Government, who had opposed the disestablishment of the Irish Church, had even proposed to lay its hands upon the funds so realized, instead of upon the Imperial Treasury, to relieve the present distress; but he (Mr. Synan) would not allow the Government to throw unproductive works on that fund if he could help it. The proposal of the Government would not either, he hoped, be accepted by the Opposition Benches, and he called upon the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition to state his opinion on the subject. In the case of the Lancashire Cotton Famine the money was given out of the Treasury, and why should the Irish people be dealt with in a different manner? He trusted the Irish Members would prevent the Government from laying their hands upon the Surplus Fund, which was already appropriated to other purposes, and which, moreover, was not equal to provide for a great emergency like the present. In France and in Austria the distress of the peasantry was met by grants from the Imperial Treasury, and he now appealed to the Government to adopt the same course towards the people of Ireland. It was not alone at the famine they had to look, but at the policy of centuries, that had made these calamities chronic, and the remedy must not be through temporary shifts, such as were contained in the Bill on the Table of the House, which but—

> "Skin and film the ulcerous place,
> Whilst rank corruption mining all within,
> Infects unseen."

MR. O'CLERY said, he must earnestly support the Vote of Censure on the Government for its inaction in face of the prevailing distress in Ireland, which was greatly to be deplored. Distress and famine were chronic in Ireland under English rule. If there never had been a precedent for the present distress the inaction would be criminal in itself; but having regard to the terrible disaster of 1846, 1847, and 1848, their inaction, possibly in the future leading to consequences as grave as in that period, was criminal in the extreme. It was a warning which came home to them with particular interest, for then, as now, precautions were to be taken; but time was frittered away, and nothing was done. With an Irish Parliament in power things would have been ordered differently; but the alien Administration of the day had no interest in saving the lives of the Irish people. Irish interests, whenever they conflicted with English interests, were disregarded. The repeal of the Corn Laws, generally looked upon as a beneficent measure, really struck a great blow at Irish prosperity, depreciating, as it did, the agricultural produce, of which her wealth was almost entirely composed. It might have been thought that the Whigs would at that time have brought before Parliament a Bill to produce a result which the Houses of Parliament and the country desired; but they did nothing of the kind—they simply passed an Act relating to vagrancy, which drove the Irish people to England, the steamboat companies making charges for passage which were almost prohibitory. He (Mr. O'Clery) would state fearlessly the history of that time and what it cost Ireland. The potato blight, which led to what was known as the Famine, commenced in 1845; and during the six years which followed, according to Government statistics, 1,029,552 of the people died on the soil of Ireland of famine and pestilence. There emigrated to America in that period 1,180,449 people, and of these 17 per cent—200,668—died within 12 months after leaving Ireland from diseases directly traceable to the famine, so that there was a total slaughter of 1,230,220 of the Irish race. In a word, one person out of every seven of the entire population of the Island died from that cause alone. This was a lesson for every English Government, no matter whether it were Whig or Tory, to take to heart. If a famine such as that of 1846-7 in Ireland had occurred in England, would there not have been a great outcry if the Government had not taken steps to relieve it? In that time there was potato blight in many countries of Europe; but it was only in Ireland people died in consequence. In Belgium and in Portugal the ports were closed against the exportations of goods, and no one was allowed to starve. Why? Because the Belgian and Portuguese Governments were legislating for their own people. It was unfortunate that the exigencies of a great Empire had to be considered rather than the wants of a starving people. What excuse had the Government for not raising money during the Recess in order to avert the miseries that had fallen upon Irish men and Irish women; for had not the British Government raised millions without the consent of Parliament for other purposes? It was useless to talk of preserving the integrity of the Empire when the Government showed itself so indifferent to the necessities of one part of it. The recent action of the French and Prussian Governments in averting distress from their people put the English Government to shame. In 1846, Sir Robert Peel pursued the same course that was now followed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He made "inquiries" and took precautions, and his Whig successor, Lord John Russell, in 1847, also made "inquiries;" but, as they found now, they allowed the people to die. They instituted measures to protect life; but those measures were gallows and gibbets for the people. It was not without deep pain he found himself, as an Irish Representative, pleading before that Parliament for the lives of his fellow-countrymen. It seemed as if there was nothing for an Irish Representative to do but to entreat the Government from year to year to permit Irish people to live. Eighty years ago England usurped the government of Ireland, and since then Ireland had suffered more through the operation of laws framed in that House than any country in Europe by the most devastating war. Famine was almost chronic in a land which exported more food than would support double her population. The population now was little more than it was at the beginning of the century; they had sustained a loss of human life by famine already unparalleled in the world's history. And why? Because they had been robbed of the control of their resources as a nation. The beef, the mutton, and the bacon were allowed to leave the ports of Ireland instead of being retained within its borders. Some months ago, at a great meeting in Tipperary, he stated his solemn conviction that Ireland was in danger—that her people would soon be face to face with famine. Public men of all shades of opinion had pronounced on the gravity of the impending crisis. The hierarchy of Ireland had solemnly urged the necessity of prompt and vigorous action. From end to end of the country came warnings to the authorities. What was done? The Chancellor of the Exchequer had told the House that night that he had caused inquiries to be made into the state of the different districts, and that he was in a position to send orders to Ireland; but it appeared to him that the British Government were determined to allow them to drain the cup of misery to the dregs as long as life would last. It was an insult to the Irish people in such circumstances, and an attempt to degrade and humiliate and pauperize them, to send round hacks and place begging boxes in the streets to ask for alms for the starving Irish. What a mockery of people in their agony! What a crime against a race virtually entering the valley of the shadow of death! It seemed there was no end to those inquiries; the Government and the authorities in Dublin Castle were to be kept informed from week to week. Was it merely to see how long the Celts could remain in the land before it could be said of them again that they were gone with a vengeance? That was the course of alien rule over a country. It would be the same with England herself, if she were subjected to some Continental Power whose Government would appropriate her resources and disregard the lives of her people. But he should probably be told that a grant of public money could not be made without the consent of Parliament. His answer was that two years ago £4,000,000 sterling were raised on the faith of the Government for the purchase of the Suez Canal Shares. The Government saw no difficulty in finding money then. Were the lives of a people of more importance than a stock-jobbing transaction of that kind? But they could have obtained the sanction of Parliament had they desired it. There was ample notice of the danger before the close of last Session; and even if there had not been at that time, there was sufficient reason for the convocation of Parliament in October or November. In 1847, Lord George Bentinck proposed that £20,000,000 should be spent in making railways in Ireland. That would have made her, as it were, a nation again. Successive Governments had never been slow to pass measures for the protection of life in Ireland; but they invariably took the shape of measures of coercion and for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. But when the lives of the people were at stake they, forsooth, saw no reason "to depart from the ordinary procedure." Now, let them not pauperize or demoralize the people. Let them devote the greater portion of this money to be voted to giving the small tenants and small holders employment on their own farms. Let them be secured the seed for next year's crop; let them set to work to improve by wages paid regularly their wretched cabins, unfit for human tenements. Let that be done, and the people would be saved; but if it was not done, the responsibility attaching to the Government in face of past disasters would be awful, and their inaction infamous to all time.

Mr. GRAY, having been chairman of the principal committee in Ireland for the relief of the present distress—the Dublin Mansion House Committee, which he called the principal committee in the sense of its having been intrusted with more subscriptions than any other and of its being more representative, wished to make a few observations. Some doubt having been thrown upon the universality of the distress, he thought it right to say that, in his opinion, no exaggeration had been used with regard to the character of the distress now prevalent in Ireland. His impression, from the debates during the last two nights, was that Englishmen scarcely realized the character of that distress; that they did not realize it at all until the letter of the Duchess of Marlborough appeared some weeks ago. He was bound to say that that letter deserved the deepest gratitude from all classes in Ireland; and he could certainly add, as one having some knowledge of the subject, that he was convinced that the belief of nearly all Irishmen, and certainly of those conversant with the subject, was that her Grace had only one object in view when she initiated the charitable fund, and that she acted upon a charitable motive. He was not going to say there had not been mistakes in its distribution. Perhaps there had been mistakes in the distribution of that fund, as there had been in the distribution of other funds; but he believed that the initiation of the fund was good, and that it was honestly and impartially administered. Now, as to the amount of distress in Ireland. The Dublin Mansion House Fund was instituted five weeks ago. It had not been really more than four weeks in active operation. It was now in connection with 500 committees, centred in all parts of Ireland. It was a mistake to say that the distress was confined to the South and West of Ireland. It was spread over all the country. It did not approach the distress of 1847, nor did he say that it was universal; but it was general in the sense of being spread over the entire country, and but for the application of private charitable funds there would already have been hundreds of deaths from starvation. The Dublin Mansion House Committee had received abundant testimony from representative men of all political and religious creeds, not that the peasantry were about to die of starvation, not that if the Government did not take prompt steps they would die, but that they were dying, and that many were living on one meal a-day, and they could no longer get credit for that. Take the committee of which he had most knowledge. They had received about £50,000, and had spent about £24,000 exclusively in the purchase of food; and in the reports which had been received from the local committees they had the information that the food had been exclusively Indian meal, and that they gave one meal of it to each family per diem. Such was the position of Ireland at that time. The question was not one as to whether power should be given to Local Boards to borrow money, or as to whether power should be given to landlords who had not received their rents. Her Majesty's Government did not seem to realize the danger that was upon them; and while they were deliberating these questions, or the question as to whether landlords would be able to raise the interest upon loans, the people were actually starving. He did not want unnecessarily to occupy the attention of the House, nor did he want to make any attack upon the Government for their lack of exertion. He believed their action had been too late. He believed that, notwithstanding what the Government had done, there would be cases of starvation by thousands within the next two months, if the people were not supplied with labour from public works or out-door relief. Her Majesty's Government seemed to think this was a matter for future arrangement, and that two or three months hence they might meet the emergency, and they did not seem to recognize the fact that were it not for the application of funds from private sources the people would have been starved while they were thinking what ought to be done. He would only add that the responsibility rested henceforward upon the shoulders of Her Majesty's Government, and desired to impress upon them the necessity of prompt action. They were about to place a Bill before Parliament authorizing Boards of Guardians to give out-door relief. That was something. But would the Boards of Guardians avail themselves of this authority. In 1847 they did not do so. Were Her Majesty's Government about to take proper steps to compel them to do so in the event of their not performing their duty in the present case? He acknowledged that the last appointment to the Local Government Board was an admirable one; but it was well known that the Board was still very weak, and that a vacancy existed thereon. Were Her Majesty's Government about to fill it with a competent man? These were not attacks upon the policy of Her Majesty's Government. They were simply questions of what they were about to do from the point of obvious duty. It was well known that in the Famine of 1846-8 the worst time came after the failure of the potato crop, when the lands remained uncropped during the succeeding year. What were Her Majesty's Government going to do to meet that emergency in the present instance? They knew very well that the lands in the South-West of Ireland would be uncropped next year, and that the farmers were eating their seed potatoes. Did not Her Majesty's Government know that within six weeks they must decide and take action upon that? After that time it would be too late. He wished to impress upon Her Majesty's Government that they had been warned last year, and that they had treated the warning with contempt, and they now had the fact to meet that the people were actually dying. Her Majesty's Government had taken steps which he (Mr. Gray), as an individual, believed to be too late. Were they going to take any measures for stocking the land for the next year? He cared not whether the money came from the Church Fund or the Consolidated Fund; but let them take it from somewhere in order to save the lives of the people. He told the House, as chairman of a committee which had necessarily more knowledge of the subject than any other body, perhaps, even of the Government itself, that their information was that the people were starving. He told them that they would have starved before but for the charitable organization started without their assistance. He appealed to Her Majesty's Government to state whether they were going to let the lives of the people of Ireland depend upon chance contributions from Australia or America? £30,000 had already been received from Australia, while but £5,000 or £6,000 had been contributed by all England. Were Her Majesty's Government about to secure that the Boards of Guardians who had, on a former occasion, neglected their duty, should be compelled to perform it in the present instance, and that the lands should be stocked for the coming year? They had but six weeks in which to do that work. Were they going to do it; and, if so, in what manner was it to be done?

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON: Although I have already addressed the House upon the subject of the Address to Her Majesty, I am most anxious to say a few words also for the sake of giving some explanation of the vote I intend to give, and to make one or two observations upon some remarks which have been made by hon. Members in the course of this debate. I am very far indeed from disparaging the importance of the issue raised by the hon. Member for Cork County (Mr. Shaw), and I wish to take this opportunity of renewing my expression of regret to him that I thought it my duty to discuss with him the title to address the House when I rose in the usual manner after the Seconder of the Address. But, if I did so, it was not in the slightest degree with the idea of underrating the importance of the subject which he felt it his duty to bring before the notice of the House, or of disparaging his right to move his Amendment. Admitting, as I do, the great practical importance of the subject, I cannot help thinking that the subject has been raised somewhat too soon—too soon, at all events, in its present shape. It was certainly necessary, and, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, it was necessary that the question of the depression in Ireland should be discussed at the earliest possible moment; and this was shown by the Government having given Notice of the introduction of a Bill which will raise the whole question. We are now asked to pass a Vote of Censure upon the Government for having taken inadequate measures for the relief of Irish distress. I do not feel I am able to give an opinion upon the question of as to whether the measures which the Government have taken are or are not adequate. The Government have admitted that they have taken upon themselves a great responsibility, both by what they have done and by what they have omitted to do. They acknowledge their responsibility, and it is the duty of the House of Commons to make them feel that responsibility, and to call them to account for it. It is not the province of the

House of Commons to shape measures; that is the province of the Government. The most important duty of the House of Commons is to watch the proceedings of the Government; to watch, from time to time, the results of those proceedings; and when they have facts before them which enable them to form a dispassionate judgment, to give their opinion as to the manner in which Government may have discharged their responsibility and as to the adequacy of their measures. Sir, there are no means in the Papers presented to us of ascertaining how far their estimate of the state of affairs prevailing in Ireland is correct or otherwise, or how far their anticipations as to the probable conditions of affairs during the winter will be altered or have been realized or exceeded. The last Report of the Local Government Board is dated at the end of October; but the Government must be in possession, I imagine, of very much later information from the Local Government Boards and Boards of Guardians showing what is the actual state of the country up to Christmas, or even a later date. Until that information is before us, how is it possible for us to say whether the measures taken by Her Majesty's Government for the relief of the distress in Ireland are adequate or not? I am, therefore, unable to say that, in my opinion, the Representatives of the Irish constituencies have altogether made out their case. I imagined that when the hon. Member for Cork County (Mr. Shaw) placed on the Paper a Notice of Motion of Censure on Her Majesty's Government for the inadequacy of their measures, he would have been prepared to lay before the House facts and figures which would have been sufficient of themselves to show that their preparations had manifestly failed and were inadequate to the emergency. I do not find, either in the speech of the Mover of the Motion, or of any hon. Member, that the statement as to the universality of serious distress is supported by any conclusive proofs which would justify the House, at so early a period, in passing a Vote of Censure upon the Government. I have heard this evening a statement of much more detail, and I think of a much more grave character, and which is, perhaps, the most important statement made in the course of this debate, that which has just been made by the hon. Member for Tipperary (Mr. Gray). The right hon. Gentleman has, as we know, very exceptional opportunities for making himself acquainted with the real state of the case; and the description which he has given of the circumstances present to his knowledge in Ireland are, in my opinion, much more grave than anything which we have had laid before us hitherto. But I think the right hon. Gentleman has spoken with becoming moderation, and I did not understand him actually to pledge himself to the statement that the measures taken by Her Majesty's Government up to the present time had broken down, or that there had been any destitution actually amounting to starvation in the country. Sir, I have, during the course of this debate, been surprised at the aspect of the case presented to us by Members of Irish constituencies, for it appears to me that the reports of the relief committees have from time to time shown that a very much more acute crisis existed than has been described by hon. Members in this House. I think it quite impossible for me, and for the House, and I should be sorry to say, at the present time, that the measures of the Government have been adequate, especially after the speech of the hon. Member for Tipperary. At the same time, I feel it equally impossible to say that any proof has been laid before us that those measures have been absolutely inadequate. The hon. Member for Galway (Mr. Mitchell Henry) has also laid before the House, in a very interesting speech, the picture of a very sad state of things as existing on the West coast of Ireland. In that picture I am inclined to think that there is not the slightest exaggeration. I believe that, in ordinary years, the condition of a very large portion of the population in that part of Ireland is one which is very little removed from destitution. I remember very well that in one of the last years during which I held office in Ireland a state of things existed on the West coast and in the Islands which was extremely similar to the condition of affairs pointed out by the hon. Member this evening. On that occasion, a few benevolent persons to whom the facts of the case became known proceeded to raise a relief fund for the purpose of keeping alive the people of those districts. I do not understand, however, the hon. Member for Galway to say that the measures which have been taken, or which are about to be taken, coupled with the exertions of the relief committees, would be inadequate to meet the distress existing in the districts referred to. But what he did point out was that measures were required of a more permanent character to regulate the position of affairs. I entirely agree with the hon. Member, and I am certain that the House will be disposed to go with him, if he can point out any measures that will be of a permanent character, tending to improve the condition of the people. At the same time, I cannot help agreeing with the right hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster) that we must not look too confidently for any improvement by legislation in such a state of things as has been described. Legislation cannot effect a change in the social condition of people who are content to exist, and who are also content to multiply in circumstances which at the best of times affords but a bare subsistence, and which in a bad year necessarily lead to destitution. We cannot expect that, without raising the social standard of life in districts such as those which have been alluded to, any permanent improvement can take place. I am ready to believe that hon. Members are right in saying that emigration on a large scale is not the remedy which is required in the present state of Ireland, and that Ireland ought to be able to support its present population. That may be true; but if so, it must also be true that the population of Ireland is not properly distributed. The population of the districts described by the hon. Member for Galway (Mr. Mitchell Henry) is, under the circumstances in which it exists, too great to be maintained on the soil. If the hon. Member can propose any measure for the permanent improvement of the inhabitants of that part of Ireland, it will, I am sure, be received by hon. Members on both sides of the House with the utmost willingness to give it the most favourable consideration. I think, perhaps, I may claim that this side of the House has a great willingness to listen to any proposal which the hon. Member may have to make for the permanent improvement of the condition of the people in this part of Ireland. As I have said before, I think it is extremely desirable that the Government, if they have any later information than we as yet possess as to the state of Ireland, should as soon as possible lay it upon the Table of the House, and that they should from time to time present to us the various Reports received from the Local Government Board, which must show the progress of the distress, and the measures which have been taken for its relief. When the time comes, and when it is conclusively proved, as I hope it may never be proved, that their measures have broken down, then, in my opinion, and certainly not now, will be the time for the Government to be called upon to answer to their responsibility for the inadequacy of the measures which they may have taken. I cannot say that the measures taken up to the present have been open to censure. They have been tried and found successful on former occasions. It is admitted that the distress is not universal; and to have adopted measures of a wider scope and of a more heroic character might, undoubtedly, have caused a panic and led to a very considerable demoralization of the people. The measures taken, so far as they have gone, whether sufficient or otherwise I know not, appear to have been measures that were, in the first instance, calculated to mitigate distress by affording employment; and if that, unfortunately, failed to save the people by out-door relief from the danger of absolute starvation, the only additional suggestion which I have heard from Irish Members is that loans should be offered by Government to the occupiers of land. I have no doubt that if that proposal were put into definite shape, and a practical scheme were laid before the House, it would be very readily entertained. I must, however, at the same time, say that the form in which I have heard it suggested does not appear to me to be one of a very practical character. In the first place, no one would deny that the State or anyone who lends money ought to have security. It may be very much to be regretted that the occupier has not a greater and more fixed interest than he possesses in his occupation, or a greater security of tenure; but we hear every day on all sides that the occupier has no security to give for the advances proposed to be made to him. In these circumstances, I cannot see how it could be a wise policy to lend money to occupiers without, as it would appear, any security. There are two more conclusive reasons against this. What security would there be for money advanced in this way being applied for the object for which it is intended? We are informed, and I have no doubt truly, that a great number of small occupiers, and indeed of large occupiers, are in an extremely embarrassed position. They owe money to their landlords for rent, and they owe money to their tradesmen as well as to persons from whom they have borrowed money. It is not possible that the Board of Works or the Government could exercise a minute supervision over the manner in which these loans were expended. And is it not but too probable that if the money were advanced permanently they would be impelled to use it for pressing necessities, that a very large portion would go to the landlords in the shape of rent, and another to the tradesmen for debt; and, therefore, that only a small portion would go in the required direction —namely, the employment of labour? Sir, I shall not at this time of night make any observations on that portion of the Amendment which refers to the duty of the House to legislate upon land tenure. It is assumed, and I should say without sufficient proof, that all the evils which afflict Ireland are directly traceable to the existing system of land tenure. It cannot be said of those on this side of the House, whether we have failed or whether we have succeeded, that we are indifferent to the question of land tenure. We have admitted that a remedy was required, and we have endeavoured to deal with it. Whether our remedy has been successful is a subject upon which there may, of course, be a difference of opinion. At the same time, I am very far from admitting that there are no evils which afflict Ireland at present that are connected with the system of land tenure; but I say further that I entirely demur to the assumption that has also been made that the Land Act has failed in its operation. I expressed an opinion in this House one or two years ago that the time was approaching, if it had not already arrived, when it would be desirable to have some inquiry into the operation and effect of the Act. I am still more strongly of that opinion now; and I think that now that we are inquiring into the condition of agriculture in England, it is desirable that the position of agriculture in Ireland, and of the occupiers, as well as the effect of the Land Act, should be inquired into; and I am not disposed to question the suggestion of my hon. Friend the Member for Reading (Mr. Shaw Lefevre), that a subject so important should not be made a mere branch of a larger inquiry, but should be intrusted to a separate Commission. Sir, I feel that the House having been addressed by so many hon. Members more competent from practical knowledge to deal with this question than myself, I owe an apology for having occupied the time of the House in making these observations upon the subject raised by the Amendment. But I do wish before I conclude to make one or two remarks upon another question, which does not appear to be absolutely relevant to the question in debate, but which I cannot avoid. I refer to the observations made on a former occasion upon what I thought to be the irrelevant character of the speech of the Seconder of the Address to Her Majesty. I do not think it necessary to enter into any detail or answer to the remarks he made on the conduct of myself, or the Liberal Party generally, in relation to the question of Home Rule. I thought that I said that that was a question not referred to in the Queen's Speech, and that his observations on the subject were absolutely irrelevant, and might be passed over. But I was somewhat astonished when the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in paying the usual compliments to the Mover and Seconder of the Address, said that he thought an extremely pertinent question had been asked by the hon. Member for Belfast (Mr. J. P. Corry), and that the House would be glad to know what was the position of the Liberal Party and of myself with regard to Home Rule, and whether it was to be considered an open question in the same sense as a great many others. I shall have something to say later on as to the expression "an open question;" but, in the first place, before I come to the merits of the question, I should like to make a short examination of the antecedents of those Gentlemen who bring this charge, and impute to us that we have now made Home Rule an open question with the Liberal Party. The hon. and learned Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt) has already referred to the circumstance of the election of the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Sligo (Colonel King-Harman). It is well that we should examine into that case a little more minutely. The hon. and gallant Member for Sligo was elected, as the whole House is aware, on a distinct pledge as a Home Ruler. If there be any doubt as to this, the House will, perhaps, allow me to read a passage from his address. On December 29, 1876, the hon. and gallant Gentleman addressed his constituents, and said—

"I think that the experience of each Session shows more and more that the pressure of Business prevents the Imperial Parliament from giving proper attention to the wants of Ireland, and I believe that the original principles of Home Government, as advocated by myself on former occasions, must eventually force themselves upon the House of Commons."

Now, this is a distinct Home Rule declaration. The House will observe that it is rather a mild statement of Home Rule; whether it was made under pressure I do not know. I will now read but one short extract from the printed address of the candidate, which will leave no doubt as to the thoroughness of his Home Rule sentiments. He said—

"I raised the cry of Home Rule at a time when no other man in Ireland had raised it. In Longford and in Dublin I fought for it. Although well beaten in my own county of Longford, I was not deterred, but went up to Dublin expecting defeat, but nevertheless determined to raise the cry of Home Rule on the hustings. The Secretary for the Home Rule League was talking to me, and he said only for those election battles the League would not be in its present position to-day. I am, as I was then, a determined Home Ruler. I think it is a question which must recommend itself to the common sense of every true Irishman. It is a question which has been often threshed out and explained, and I need not go into details. But I simply ask what can be more common-sense-like than that a nation should demand to manage its own affairs as a man manages the affairs of his own household? Home Rule involves every other point in the programme, as if we had Home Rule everything else would follow. But as we have it not, we must go in for as much as we can get for the good of Ireland from the Imperial Parliament."

There could be no mistake as to these sentiments. A resolution was passed at the meeting of the Home Rule League in Dublin, on January 5, 1877. It was moved by the Rev. Joseph Galbraith, seconded by Mr. Dawson, and it was resolved—

"That, remembering the part taken by Mr. King-Harman in the very origin of the Home Rule movement, his participation in the earliest struggles of that cause, and the signal services rendered by him as one of the secretaries of the National Conference, we desire to express our great satisfaction at his selection as candidate by the large and influential meeting of the electors of Sligo; and that in perfect reliance on his proved and disinterested devotion to the Home Rule cause, and the interests of his country generally, we look forward to his return for that county as an essential service to Ireland."

The hon. and gallant Gentleman, when he entered the House of Commons, did not shrink from the pledges which he had given; on the contrary, he took the earliest opportunity of fulfilling those pledges. On the 24th of April, 1877, the hon. and gallant Member seconded a Motion of which a great deal has been heard—namely, that which was moved by the hon. Member for Cork County (Mr. Shaw), demanding a Select Committee to inquire into and report upon the demand of the Irish people for the restoration of the Irish Parliament. In seconding that Motion he took the opportunity of distinctly defining his position with regard to Home Rule. He said—

"There were many Irishmen of considerable intelligence and influence who would limit their demand by saying 'Give us a local commission for Ireland who can legislate for us on such subjects as Railway and Gas Bills;' but he did not acquiesce in that limitation—far from it. If, however, the Committee, after a full and fair investigation of the subject, decided that Home Rule to that extent only should be granted, he asked that that might be granted first, and then they could discuss the other points afterwards."—[3 *Hansard*, ccxxxiii. 1752.]

The hon. and gallant Member, therefore, seconded that very Motion which, in a slightly modified and milder form, my noble Friend Lord Ramsay promised to vote for the other day at Liverpool. On account of that promise, I am informed that it is suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, by the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis), and the hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Plunket), that I ought to have repudiated his candidature, and that I ought not to have wished for his success. We are given to understand that those two Gentlemen —the hon. and gallant Member for Sligo (Colonel King-Harman) and my noble Friend Lord Ramsay—have done a very objectionable and very dreadful thing— that they have promised to vote for an Irish

Parliament, and for that reason have cut themselves off from all sympathy with right-minded Members of Parliament. Let us see now how a very high authority the other day defined the nature of this offence—"Home Rule," we are told, "means, I think, disintegration of the Empire; and whoever votes for it, on whatever side he sits, is false to his Queen and his country." Gentlemen, whether hon. Members or not, who have been guilty of tampering with an offence so described are, no doubt, looked upon with suspicion. But how has the reprobation of the Government been marked? The speech I have just referred to was made, I think, on April 24th, 1877; and on October the 5th, 1878, the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Sligo (Colonel King-Harman) was appointed Lord Lieutenant of the county of Roscommon, I believe by the very nobleman who gave the description of Home Rule which I have just quoted. Sir, this question has been referred to by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt); but I have not observed that anyone has had the courage to attempt a reply to the allegation which has been made, except my hon. and learned Friend the Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Plunket), who, with his usual courage, came forward and said—"Yes; it is quite true that the hon. and gallant Gentleman was appointed Lieutenant of his county. It is quite true that this is a great social position; and when the hon. and gallant Gentleman was appointed to that office, we did not think much about his political opinions. He was appointed because he had £40,000 a-year, and was held in universal respect in the county." We now know that £40,000 a-year and universal respect in the county are to condone falseness to the Queen and to the country. Sir, I do not know—I have not taken the trouble to inquire—what may be the future prospects in this respect of my noble friend Lord Ramsay. I do not know whether his income may justify such an appointment in the opinion of the hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin, and how far it may be prejudiced by his adopting Home Rule principles. But let us see whether this is merely a social position? What are the duties of the Lord Lieutenant of a county? He recommends the appointment of county magistrates; he recommends for commissions in the Militia; and he appoints Deputy Lieutenants, which, as hon. Members know, are offices of considerable political influence. Everyone is aware that the appointment of Lord Lieutenant of a county is pre-eminently political. It is not made without reference to social grounds; but it is pre-eminently on political grounds that this office is bestowed. Any one of us can call to mind instances on both sides of politics of men socially most fitted for the position having been passed over in favour of somebody with stronger political claims. But my hon. and learned Friend the Member for the University of Dublin says that it is a social appointment, and that the case of the hon. and gallant Member for Sligo was quite different from the political bargain entered into by my noble friend (Lord Ramsay) at the election at Liverpool. I should like to know from the Secretary to the Treasury—of course, I have no knowledge of the fact—whether the hon. and gallant Member for Sligo receives those Circulars issued on pressing occasions by the Treasury; or whether his political allegiance has been entirely discarded on account of his Home Rule tendencies? We know that it is the custom, on the occasion of a Member taking his seat during the sitting of Parliament, that he should be introduced by two of his Friends. I have taken the trouble to ascertain who performed that office for the hon. and gallant Member; and I find he was introduced by the hon. Member for the Southern Division of the West Riding, and either by the noble Lord the Member for Donegal (the Marquess of Hamilton), or by his noble Brother the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Claud Hamilton). If I am not mistaken, the father of these two noble Lords occupied at the time the position of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and I believe both these noble Lords generally share the political opinions of their relative. I am surprised, therefore, that, considering the reprobation with which Home Rule opinions are regarded on the opposite side of the House, the son of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland should have been selected to introduce the hon. and gallant Member. I should like to ask a question on that subject of the Secretary to the Treasury. I should like to ask it of a very steady supporter of the

Government opposite, who has given them his support to-night. I should not be surprised if the hon. and learned Member for Wexford (Sir George Bowyer) also accepted the Circular. I might ask the same question with regard to the junior Member for Newcastle (Mr. Hamond), who, like the hon. and learned Member for Wexford, is described in this small and, I believe, accurate volume, which gives a short account of the principles of hon. Members, as "in favour of a system called Home Rule for Ireland." Such, then, is the description of these two hon. Gentlemen. I have been looking over the list of candidates for the next General Election, and I have not yet discovered who is the Conservative candidate that is going to eject the junior Member who avows these opinions. Again, although I do not see him in his place, I should be glad to know—and the House would be glad to know—what are the exact relations of the noble Lord the Member for County Down (Viscount Castlereagh) with Home Rule? This work does not contain so explicit an account of his political opinions; but I am aware that the Home Rule Association some time ago made a declaration that they had had some communication with the noble Lord, and that they were entirely satisfied. It might be satisfactory, therefore, to learn what are the precise opinions of the noble Lord, although I do not for a moment profess to know what those opinions are. At the same time, it seems to me that after the declaration of the Prime Minister in "another place," and after those details which I have inflicted upon the House, that it is not from us, but from the Government, that some explanations are due. For myself, I maintain that I have done nothing of which I am, or ought to be, ashamed; and I leave it to the Government to explain whether it is right to appoint to a position of very high honour — whether political or social — a gentleman holding those opinions with which you so entirely disagree? But I have no doubt, however, in my own mind, that both the Government and the Party on this side have been right in not repudiating a common political allegiance and fellowship with gentlemen holding these opinions. I will now address myself to the question put to me by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as to whether Irish Home Rule is to be an open question with the Liberal Party? I should like to know a little more precisely what the right hon. Gentleman means by "an open question." I have heard of open questions of great importance in the Cabinet. Questions of the greatest importance at critical periods of our history have been regarded as open questions in the Cabinet, and the term is one which is perfectly well understood. The term is very often applied by constituencies to their candidates, and certain tests have been imposed; but I never heard before of tests being imposed by a Government, or by the Leaders of a Party, upon Members desirous of supporting them, and I want to know on what foundation this practice rests which the Government seeks to introduce? I only know of one test that can be applied to Members of a political Party, and that seems to be a general agreement, and a general disposition, to act under a common Leader; and I have never heard until now, when some Party advantage may be obtained from it, of questions being open in relation to a Party. I will frankly say that if Lord Ramsay had declared himself to be decidedly a supporter of Home Rule, I should not have written to him the letter which I did. I make that declaration with perfect sincerity, and, at the same time, with very great pain; with sincerity, because, in my opinion, there are questions of such great importance that about them there ought to be no doubt and no hesitation whatever; with pain, because if there is one thing I desire more ardently than another, it is to see the time when Members from Irish constituencies shall come to this Parliament and take part in our debates upon the grounds of political, and not of national, opinion. But I am afraid it is not likely to hasten the arrival of such a time if an English Member is to be placed under a sort of political excommunication for supporting the views which are honestly held, and ardently desired, by the great body of the Irish Members. I say that the question of Home Rule is one of such vital importance that about it there ought to be no doubt whatever. But Lord Ramsay did not pledge himself to support Home Rule—he pledged himself to vote for an inquiry into the nature of the Irish demand. To everything which I have said upon the subject I entirely adhere. I adhere to it, inasmuch as I am opposed to an inquiry —not because it is mischievous in itself, but because I think it is calculated to give rise to false impressions in Ireland, and to lead the Irish people to suppose that candidates and constituencies are willing to grant their demands, but who, in reality, are not disposed to do anything of the kind. I opposed that inquiry, and I never advised any candidate over whom I had any influence to give a pledge to vote for it. Still, I cannot help saying that this is not a difference on a vital question of principle. It is a difference only as to the manner in which a certain *bonâ fide* demand of the Irish people should be met. The Conservative Party, and we on this side of the House, have not been wrong in repudiating those who, contrary to our opinion, are advised to take this pledge. In what I have said to-night I have not, in the slightest degree, condemned the conduct hitherto pursued by Her Majesty's Government. But what I do most strongly condemn is what I cannot but call the hypocrisy that seeks to fasten on an opponent the imputation of discreditable conduct for that which is perfectly innocent in itself, and that which has also been practised by themselves.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. GIBSON) said, that the debate had brought the real extent of the distress now prevailing in Ireland into a clear light, and that no one, after listening to it or perusing the Papers, could doubt but that the Government were fully acquainted with the nature and extent of the emergency with which they had to deal. There had at first been a tendency in some quarters to exaggerate, and in others to minimize, the distress; but there was no doubt the truth had been pretty fairly ascertained. The voluntary agencies had already been sufficiently referred to; and he thought that all would admit that the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund and the Dublin Mansion House Fund had both done good work. The first point that seemed to him to call for remark was that the measures taken by the Government had not been seriously found fault with in any quarter. No one who had read the Papers could doubt that Her Majesty's Government had proceeded with the anxious desire neither to interfere too soon nor too late, but to be guided by prudence and circumspection. It had been suggested by the hon. Member for Limerick that the first Circular issued by the Government in November, 1879, which was tentative, had not worked at all. But that was not the case; because, in response to that Circular, applications for loans to the extent of £128,000 were asked for, and had not been refused. When the Government came to the conclusion that it was desirable to go beyond that first Circular, they did not hesitate to do so; and now the result was that a sum of very little short of £400,000 had been applied for. Notwithstanding what had been stated, there was no single case of death reported in which the cause could be authentically shown to have been famine or starvation. It was worthy of remark that none of the Irish workhouses were now filled—as they certainly would have been had the state of starvation and poverty been so great as had been represented. At the present moment, however, some of the workhouses were very full; but there was room in every one of them. He was happy to state that the prospect of a fuel famine had, in the opinion of persons of experience, already passed off; and there were actually Unions that had declined to avail themselves of the permission to give outdoor relief in fuel. He thought that Government had shown that they had dealt in this crisis with vigour and necessary caution. These were circumstances which should not be lost sight of for a moment. They should not render the House forgetful of the actual distress that existed in Ireland; but, at the same time, should put them on their guard against exaggerated statements. Another circumstance which should be borne in mind, and which showed that the Government had given their most anxious consideration to the situation of affairs in Ireland for some time, was the intimation made by the First Lord of the Admiralty that they had carefully considered the necessity of providing seed where it was required. Hon. Members opposite who represented Irish constituencies had, it appeared to him, mixed up the two questions of what should be done to relieve the immediate distress, and what could be done to prevent permanently the recurrence of a similar state of things. The latter was a gigantic question; and if they were going then to discuss it they would never get to the end of the debate. It had been stated that, under a peasant proprietary system, much of this distress might have been obviated; but looking at the position of those who were now suffering most acutely—it appeared that they were the tenantry in occupation of small farms; that they had not to pay instalments to the Government towards the purchase of their holdings; and that they had not, in fact, paid any rent to their landlords during the past year or so—it was difficult to see that calling them peasant proprietors, instead of tenants, would improve their position. Another suggestion thrown out by the hon. Member for Cork County (Mr. Shaw) was that out-door relief might be given. He (the Attorney General for Ireland) thought that that question had been disposed of already by the ample information supplied to the House. The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated the opinion of the Government upon that subject; and the Bill now before Parliament showed, moreover, how liberally the Government were disposed to behave with regard to this question of out-door relief. The hon. Member for Tralee (The O'Donoghue) suggested that instead of giving advances to landlords they should be made to tenants. He could understand that advances might be given to a tenant who was a substantial man; but how could you make an advance to a tenant whose tenure or circumstances did not warrant it? Neither the Government nor anyone else would be warranted in making advances in such circumstances. It was obvious that that important and difficult question of the distress in Ireland was not a Party question. He was sure that hon. Members on both sides were equally anxious to arrive at the adoption of some measures which would cope with the distress, and enable Ireland to pass through the present crisis with as little suffering as possible. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster) had spoken with the greatest moderation and fairness with reference to the Motion then before the House, and also as to the attitude of the Government, of course reserving to himself the complete right to question their actions hereafter if he should see reason to object to it. He was glad that the right hon. Gentleman had likewise paid a tribute to the benevolence and kindly feeling shown by the landlords, who were themselves in great difficulty, in assisting their tenants through the difficult crisis. The hon. Member for Reading (Mr. Shaw Lefevre), in alluding several times to the agitation, mentioned some tendencies or effects of which he disapproved; but he also expressed no censure whatever as to the mode in which the agitation had been carried on. In fact, he suggested that the landlord should be obliged to pay compensation for disturbance to tenants who did not pay rent, and who might be evicted for non-payment. Really, the landlord, who was not to get any rent, and who was not to evict, would be in a very unfortunate position. Well, what the noble Lord (the Marquess of Hartington) said as to the distress did not call for any observations from him; but the noble Lord was anxious to explain something which had been referred to in the course of the debate, and he adopted the very familiar artifice of diverting attention from his own proceedings by making a vigorous attack on what he alleged to be the proceedings of others. That was an old fallacy, and one known well as an attempt to throw dust in other people's eyes. What was the analogy between the way in which the hon. and gallant Member for Sligo was treated by his Party, and the way in which the noble Lord opposite and his eminent Colleagues treated Lord Ramsay? When his hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Sligo was a candidate for Sligo he would like to know if any Member of the Ministry wrote letters, which were published in the newspapers, advising the Sligo people to return him? Did the Prime Minister say a single word, or make a single suggestion, that he should be elected? And at an earlier time than that, when there was a contest for the City of Dublin, where there was an immense Conservative vote, and his hon. and gallant Friend was started as a Home Rule candidate, the great majority of the Conservative Party held aloof, and allowed him to be beaten by thousands. The Conservative Leaders withheld their support, and not a single official wrote a letter in the Press on his behalf. What was the suggestion, then, which could be made, when at Dublin he was allowed to be beaten without a single sign on the part of the Conservative Leaders, and when at Sligo he was returned without a single action on their part? The single charge that remained was, that he, a leading man in his county—one of the most active of its magistrates, one of the most vigorous and capable men in all county affairs—was not passed by when the Lieutenancy was vacant; and it was attempted to be urged that this was analogous to the proceedings of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich and of the Leader of the Opposition with reference to Lord Ramsay's candidature in Liverpool the other day. Surely that was rank nonsense? When Lord Ramsay was candidate for Liverpool, recommended by such distinguished Gentlemen, he was credited by the fullest official sanction of the Leaders of the Party opposite. The noble Lord had now criticised the acts of the Government; but he had spoken here somewhat differently from the way in which he wrote to Liverpool. He said this—that it was a rash and wrong thing to create false impressions and illusions in Ireland. He said he did not differ from Lord Ramsay on any vital point or question of principle. Was not Home Rule, then, a question of principle? Was that not calculated to produce false impressions and illusions?

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON: I do not say that the right hon. and learned Gentleman is far from the sense; but I wish to point out that he does not quote my words accurately.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. GIBSON) said, he was not saying what the noble Lord said in his letters, but what he said in the House not half an hour ago. He took the words down at the time they were uttered. The noble Lord said distinctly that he did not think the promise to inquire into Home Rule involved any vital question of principle. It must, therefore, go forth from the front Opposition Bench, that a candidate might say that he would or would not inquire into the necessity of Home Rule without there being any vital principle at stake. But what did the noble Lord say in the debate on Home Rule in the year 1874? He said—

> "That in honour and honesty the Imperial Parliament . . . could only look at the question from an Imperial point of view; and that they were convinced that . . . they could never give their assent to the proposal of the hon. and Member for Limerick."—[3 *Hansard*, ccxx. 771.]

He now asked whether any hon. Member thought that when the Irish people—a quick and impulsive people—read, or had read to them, the statements of the noble Lord, they would believe that he still entertained the opinions he proclaimed as his in 1874? When they now heard the explanation of the noble Lord as to what he regarded as not being a vital question of principle, they would find it hard to understand what was the attitude of the noble Lord in reference to Home Rule. One of the noble Lord's most ardent supporters, who used to sit directly behind him, but who had lately moved down lower below the Gangway, in the very same debate, said—

> "That every look, every word, ought to be carefully watched; for the slightest symptom of acquiescence with the Motion would be used as a pretext for perpetuating in Ireland what he must be permitted to call a gross and mischievous delusion."—[*Ibid.* 925.]

Now, it would be far more material if the noble Lord, instead of making vague statements and charges against others, had answered the question which was put to him—namely, What did the noble Lord think of Home Rule, and what attitude did he assume in reference to it? Did he consider it a gross and mischievous delusion which was the opinion of his followers in 1874; or was he only advanced so far as to consider that it was a difference, but not on a vital question of principle? It would be more satisfactory, when next the noble Lord came to deal with such a question, if he would make up his mind with a little more precision, and be prepared to state his views to the House and country more in detail, and in such a manner as to remove all ground for misconception.

MR. GABBETT moved the adjournment of the debate.

MR. BIGGAR seconded the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Gabbett.*)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, this was now the third night of the debate on the Address, and he would put it to the House whether it was not desirable to endeavour to bring the discussion to a close? They had been discussing at great length, but not at all at too great length, the important questions that had been raised with regard to the state of Ireland; and if hon. Gentlemen would only consider that immediately following the Address they would proceed with a measure which touched the very heart of the question, and that there were other measures also affecting the question which were about to be brought forward, they would see that they would have ample opportunities for discussing all the questions that they desired to discuss, and for bringing forward all the practical suggestions which, no doubt, they desired to offer. He would, therefore, press upon hon. Members, although the Government did not wish at all to curtail the discussion on the part of Irish Members on that important question of Irish distress, they would be taking the best course really in the interest of their own country if they would allow the debate upon this stage of the Address to be concluded, and if they would allow the Government to take an early day for the discussion of the practical measures which the Government had to introduce.

Mr. SHAW regretted very much that he could not, on the present occasion, concur with the right hon. Gentleman. There had been developed an amount of difference of opinion on this question that did not at all appear at the beginning. The Irish Members had been informed that they had not made out any case whatever. Now, it happened that he held in his hand letters which he had that day received, and one of them was a letter referring to a district in the north of his own county, in which he was told, on very good authority, that 700 human beings, or over 100 families, were trying to live on 2*s*. a-week; and if that was not starvation he did not know what was. In the south of the same county a case was brought before his attention by a friend the other day, showing that there were hundreds of families there who were trying to live on a similarly small and miserable sum. Before he left home, Mr. Connor, of Manch, wrote, asking him if he understood the position in which the out-door relief question was; and whether, if the Board of Guardians passed a resolution to give out-door relief, the Local Government Board would allow it? He replied in the affirmative, and the Guardians passed a resolution and sent it up to Dublin. The result was, that a prompt and peremptory refusal to grant this out-door relief was sent down. Now, he wanted to know from the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, did that right hon. Gentleman realize the real state of the case? He did not believe he did. He did not believe the Government realized the importance and the seriousness of the crisis into which Ireland was hurrying. He had looked over the Bill of the Government, and he did not think that their proposals were in any way adequate for the future. On the contrary, he believed they were grossly inadequate, and would not at all meet the necessities of the case. He should be very glad, indeed, if he could now sit down; but the Home Rulers had received an amount of attention in that House, and in the country of late, that was enough to make modest men blush and feel quite overwhelmed. However, they did not feel at all uneasy under the criticisms which had been made upon them. It seemed as if the Parties were competing with each other as to which of them should not touch the Home Rulers; but the real fact of the case was, that the Home Rulers had not at all made up their minds as to which of the Parties they should touch. He was very much disposed not to enlist under the banner of the noble Lord. He had a very great amount of sympathy for the Party opposite, and for their great Leader; and he thought that they were a great deal more teachable and more workable than the Party on his own side of the House. There were not such a number of philosophers among them. History showed that. They swore at Catholic Emancipation, and passed it; they swore against the repeal of the Corn Laws, and repealed them; they swore against Household Suffrage, and they established it; and he had not the slightest doubt that if the Home Rulers gave them the slightest encouragement they would act similarly towards it, and there would be 50 Conservative Home Rule candidates at the next General Election. He had a great admiration for the noble Lord, whose speech that night had increased that admiration—there was so much consistency and sincerity in it. But he had a fear that the noble Lord was too innocent entirely to lead a political Party. The noble Lord should have seen that all the talk from the other side about Home Rule and Home Rulers was the merest electioneering clap-trap; but the country had thought out the whole question, and when a General Election came there would not be the slightest doubt about it. The noble Lord wished the time would come when the Irish Members would join naturally with the English Parties. He joined with the noble Lord heartily in that aspiration; he would do anything to hasten the coming of that time: but that time could not come until the evils which were now existing in Ireland were remedied. The Irish Party did not come there to court Party alliances. They did not care for Party alliances; they came there to appeal to the House of Commons, and to the English people, to redress their grievances, and it would be impossible for them to fall into any Party combinations until those grievances were redressed; in fact, it was idle to think that they should do so. He hoped sincerely that there would be no effort to wrangle over this question of adjournment. There were several English Gentlemen, as well as several Irish Members, who had intended to speak, but had not yet been able to do so.

Mr. BIGGAR rose to address the House, but——

Mr. SPEAKER said, that the hon. Member for Cavan having seconded the Motion for the adjournment of the debate was not now entitled to speak.

Mr. O'CONNOR POWER wished to support the view of the hon. Member for Cork, that they should be permitted to adjourn the debate for the purpose of giving other English and Irish Members an opportunity of speaking. It had been admitted on both sides of the House that the Irish question at the present moment was one of supreme importance, and that it transcended any other question mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. Until they had put a finish to the Irish question, they could not give a complete answer to Her Majesty's Speech. He would like to appeal to some Member of the Government to let them know what amount of money had been advanced in answer to applications for loans; for he remembered that in ordinary times, under existing Acts of Parliament, people endeavoured to borrow money, and owing to the apathy and negligence of the Local Government Board, and of Boards generally in Ireland, they had not been able to get it. He thought the necessity of continuing the debate would be generally recognized. A good deal had been said that night on the subject of an inquiry into Home Rule. Personally, he had never been in favour of presenting their demand to English candidates in that form. He had always been in favour of asking English candidates whether they would vote for Home Rule? and had decided his own support in accordance with the answer to that question. It was evident now that the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition had proceeded so far in his political education in regard to Ireland that he did not consider anyone who would vote for an Inquiry differed from him on a vital principle. The time might come when the noble Lord might not consider that voting for Home Rule was a question of vital principle either. He could only join the hon. Member for Cork in commending the noble Lord's sincerity; but the more sincere the noble Lord was, the more determined he (Mr. O'Connor Power) was to resist the Imperial policy which the noble Lord seemed to have borrowed from the other side of the House.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY would have been very happy to have seen Home Rule altogether excluded from that discussion, for he thought the only thing that ought to occupy their minds was what was overhanging the people of Ireland. That was not mere distress nor mere disease. It was death by the thousand, if measures different from those now promised by the Government were not taken. The only ray of hope that he had observed in the debate was the speech they had heard from the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Hermon). He was sorry that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was a man of equally sympathetic nature, was not in the House to listen to that speech, for the right hon. Gentleman would have learned a lesson from it that would have guided him to a proper solution of the difficulty. What was the position of this matter? He would put it very briefly, and he asked the attention of the Government. The Irish Government had refused to adopt the system of reproductive works. They insisted, in the first instance, that all relief should come by employment from the landlords. They were obliged to abandon that, and at the last moment they were obliged to adopt the worst, the most demoralizing, and the most wasteful system of spending public money that could be devised, and that was on repairing the roads. The Government had admitted that that delay in the adoption of the system of reproductive works rendered necessary another thing, which they had repudiated in the first instance, and that was out-door relief as the entire solution of that question. They were now come to this—that it was too late to make a proper use of reproductive works, and everything must be done by out-door relief, and that out-door relief was demanded by the Government from the impoverished landlords and tenantry of Ireland. He protested against that. Were they going to allow the people of Ireland to starve, dependent upon money which could not come from the pockets of those impoverished persons? Gentlemen who came down last year and wanted to give £100,000 to the inhabitants of the Rhodope Mountains, were now appealing to the nations of the world for charity for the Irish people. It was only within the last two days that they had concluded a series of experiments to inquire into the cause of the bursting of a gun last year; and he dared say in that series of experiments, which ended in the discovery that it was some blunder that burst the gun, they had expended an amount of money which would go far to relieve many an impoverished family in Ireland. He appealed to the Government to come forward honestly and generously—to come forward in the noble spirit which shone forth in the words of the hon. Member for Preston—and not to meet the emergency only with the miserable proposals which they had laid on the Table, and which could only end in the murder of the Irish people. If they stuck to that Bill, it would not be a charge of neglect only that would lie at their doors, after all the warnings they had had. Let them go freely and generously to the rescue of Ireland. This was an unfortunate opportunity, but it was a great one. Let them save the people now from famine, not by any miserable concatenation of failures such as they had in the present Bill, but let them save them generously, and they would lay the foundation of something like what they would all wish to see—namely, a better feeling between the people of the two countries.

Mr. O'DONNELL said, it was perfectly impossible for the debate on that stage of the Address to conclude that night. In the first place, it was quite evident that the Government were not yet thoroughly aware of the extent of the misery with which they had to grapple. It was quite plain that they did not realize the fearful destiny that was hanging over the Irish people. Their relief projects, as presented down to the present, were worthless. They were an insult to common sense and humanity. There must be further ventilation of the question. Every effort permitted by the Constitution of the House must be exhausted in order to force the discussion upon the Government, and to force them to take proper measures for the salvation of the lives of the Irish people. But there was also a bye-question, which was in itself sufficiently important to prevent the debate being concluded that night. They, the Colleagues and Friends of the illustrious Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell), had listened while the Government repeated the charges which had been spread against them. It was enough for him to say that they were thoroughly resolved to meet those charges, and, if necessary, to extort from the Government the opportunity of convincing them of their inaccuracy. They had attacked the hon. Member for Meath in the broad daylight, but in his absence. They had filled the columns of their Press with their attacks upon him; and he assured them this debate would not be allowed to close until there had been full opportunity taken for exposing the statements that had been made against the hon. Member for Meath, and against his Colleagues. In fact, they had a sort of claim to treat with the Government as rival potentates upon this matter. The Government had lifted them into the position of the Leaders of all the Opposition against them. To use the eloquent expression of a Member of the Government on an electioneering tour in Liverpool, it was "Parnell and his Clique" who led the revolution, who dominated the Liberals, who compelled the Whigs to oppose the Government. Well, he could assure the Government that as they had chosen to honour "Parnell and his Clique" with their special attention, that their special attention would be specially returned. But, as he said before, that was a bye-question. The great question was the salvation of the lives of the people. They were not satisfied in any way; they were not satisfied that the Government realized the task before them; and it was necessary to infuse a little more light than at present illuminated the Government on that matter.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY appealed to hon. Members opposite not to oppose the adjournment of the debate. He asked them to remember the speech which had been made by the hon. Member for Tipperary (Mr. Gray), who was Chairman of the Mansion House Fund, and who told them——[*Interruption.*] How dare the hon. Member——[*Loud cries of* "Order!"]

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is bound to address himself to the Chair, and not to individual Members.

MR. O'CONNOR POWER: I rise to a point of Order. I think my hon. Friend the Member for Galway County (Mr. Mitchell Henry) will receive the sympathy of the House when the facts are stated. An hon. Member opposite used a violent expression in a very extraordinary manner; and he so conducted himself as to attract the attention of my hon. Friend, who naturally made a remark upon it. I confess it is difficult to describe the conduct of the hon. Member opposite in Parliamentary language. I admit I am in a difficulty in that matter; but I say this—that if conduct like that should be again perpetrated, I appeal to you, Sir, that you will subject the interrupter to your censure.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY, resuming, said, he was most anxious that nothing irritating should occur. He was sorry the hon. Member interrupted him in a matter of great importance. No one could have heard the statement of his hon. Friend the Member for Tipperary (Mr. Gray), made on his responsibility as Chairman of the Mansion House Committee, without being convinced of the gravity of the crisis. But if the House did not think that sufficient facts had been brought before the House, further facts would be adduced to-morrow; and, therefore, they must persist in the adjournment of the debate.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN hoped that the Government would yield on this question. The constituents of many hon. Members felt very strongly on this subject of Irish distress, but many Members had not yet had an opportunity of addressing the House. Some of those hon. Members, feeling that this was a matter which primarily interested the Irish Members, did not like to interfere when they arose to address the House; but the English Members should not let the debate close without an opportunity of expressing themselves.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON said, he was unwilling to interpose in this discussion; but he thought this was a matter which could best be decided between the Government and the Irish Members. On the whole, he urged, however, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should assent to the adjournment of the debate.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he thought there could be no doubt they must agree to the adjournment of the debate; but the House must observe that if they adjourned the debate now, they could not go on with it to-morrow. It would become an Order of the Day, and Notices of Motion would necessarily take precedence, unless private Members gave way. The hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) had a Notice, and he did not know, but he hoped he would be willing to give way and allow the debate to proceed; if not, of course, the debate could not be resumed till Thursday. It was very far from the wish of the Government to stop the discussion upon the condition of Ireland. In assenting to the adjournment of the debate, he must appeal to hon. Members who had Notices on the Paper to-morrow to give way, and allow the debate to proceed.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

ANCIENT MONUMENTS BILL.—[BILL 51.]

(*Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Beresford Hope, Mr. Morgan, Sir Richard Wallace.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that it had been before the House on several previous occasions, and was therefore well known to hon. Members.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir John Lubbock.*)

Mr. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT moved the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. ONSLOW seconded the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." —(*Mr. Bromley-Davenport.*)

Mr. MUNDELLA supported the second reading of the Bill, which he thought ought now to be allowed to pass.

Mr. J. LOWTHER wished to remind the House of a fact which had, apparently, escaped the notice of the hon. Baronet, which was that the Bill had only been delivered since the last Sitting of the House, and that, consequently, there had been no opportunity for hon. Members to give Notice of opposition to it. If, therefore, the spirit of the half-past 12 o'clock Rule was to be observed by the House it was manifest that it would be unreasonable to proceed with the Bill after objection was taken to its being proceeded with at half-past 2, a couple of hours later than the hour prescribed in the Rule to which he had referred.

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK said, he would have been very reluctant to press the Bill at that hour of the night, had it not been for the manner in which it had been treated on previous occasions. If his hon. Friends opposite really desired to consider the Bill, he would be happy to give them time to do so; but he feared that they had made up their minds. The Bill was really the same as that upon which the House had often expressed an opinion, and he thought, therefore, that no object would be gained by delay.

Mr. ASSHETON protested against the Bill being pushed forward in such a hurry. It proposed to deal with private property in what he considered a most ruthless and unjustifiable manner, and he would oppose it by every means in his power.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT said, he did not know whether the Chief Secretary for Ireland had spoken on behalf of the Government.

Mr J. LOWTHER replied, that he had spoken on behalf of the House.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT thought, perhaps, the right hon. Gentleman was returning to his former instincts, and that, having forgotten the official position he held, he was taking the lead, as in the last Parliament, they must remember, he always did in measures of obstruction. The right hon. Gentleman appeared to be the great obstructive of this Bill, and he was not at all surprised that he should take that attitude. They would see enough, no doubt, of an hon. Member from Ireland who had preached obstruction of this Bill at every stage; but he only wanted to point out now that there were no Gentlemen who understood the art of obstruction so well, or practised it so frequently, as hon. Gentlemen opposite.

Mr. C. BECKETT-DENISON did not think the remarks the House had just heard would much advance this discussion. Personally, he was not in the least opposed to the Bill; but he would suggest that if, on the chance of a great many opponents of the Bill being absent, it was pressed through that stage that night, the opposition at the next stage would be all the fiercer for it. Of course, he understood that the hon. Baronet, after unsuccessfully trying four or five Sessions to pass this Bill, looked with great disfavour on any opposition, even at that late hour of the morning; but he certainly could not give the hon. Baronet his support at that hour, and under those circumstances.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 35; Noes 55: Majority 20.—(Div. List, No. 2.)

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

PENAL CLAUSES ABOLITION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. P. J. Smyth, Bill for the repeal of certain Penal Sections of "The Catholic Relief Act, 1829," *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. P. J. Smyth, Dr. O'Leary, and Mr. Synan.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 59.]

STRENSALL COMMON BILL.

On Motion of Lord Eustace Cecil, Bill to provide for ascertaining any Rights of Common or other rights in or over Strensall Common, in the North Riding of the county of York, and for the acquisition and compensation of such rights and the use of the said Common for military purposes, *ordered* to be brought in by Lord EUSTACE CECIL, Colonel STANLEY, and Colonel LOYD LINDSAY.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 60.]

COMMONS ACT (1876) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. MUNDELLA, Bill to amend "The Commons Act, 1876," *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. MUNDELLA, Sir HENRY PEEK, and Lord EDMOND FITZMAURICE.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 61.]

COMMONS.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed, Six Members to be nominated by the House and Five by the Committee of Selection, to consider every Report made by the Inclosure Commissioners certifying the expediency of any Provisional Order for the inclosure or regulation of a Common, and presented to the House during the present Session, before a Bill be brought in for the confirmation of such Order:—That it be an Instruction to the Committee, That they have power in respect to each such Provisional Order to inquire and report to the House whether the same should be confirmed by Parliament, and, if so, whether with or without modification; and in the event of their being of opinion that the same should not be confirmed, except subject to modifications, to report such modifications accordingly with a view to such Provisional Order being remitted to the Inclosure Commissioners.—(*Sir Matthew Ridley.*)

And, on February 20, Committee *nominated* as follows:—Mr. SPENCER WALPOLE, Mr. LEVESON GOWER, Sir WALTER BARTTELOT, Mr. FAWCETT, Mr. PELL, Sir CHARLES DILKE, and Five Members to be added by the Committee of Selection:—Power to send for persons, papers, and records; Five to be the quorum.

PUBLIC PETITIONS.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed, to whom shall be referred all Petitions presented to the House, with the exception of such as relate to Private Bills; and that such Committee do classify and prepare abstracts of the same, in such form and manner as shall appear to them best suited to convey to the House all requisite information respecting their contents, and do report the same from time to time to the House; and that the reports of the Committee do set forth the number of signatures to each Petition only in respect to those signatures to which addresses are affixed:—And that such Committee have power to direct the printing *in extenso* of such Petitions, or of such parts of Petitions, as shall appear to require it:—And that such Committee have power to report their opinion and observations thereupon to the House:—Sir CHARLES FORSTER, Sir UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, The O'DONOGHUE, Mr. O'CONOR, Mr. M'LAGAN, Earl DE GREY, Mr. H. CORRY, Mr. CAVENDISH BENTINCK, Mr. REGINALD YORKE, Sir CHARLES RUSSELL, Viscount NEWPORT, Mr. SIMONDS, Mr. MULHOLLAND, Marquess of TAVISTOCK, and Mr. CHARLES TENNANT:—Three to be the quorum.—(*Sir Charles Forster.*)

POST OFFICE (MONEY ORDERS) BILL.

On Motion of Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON, Bill to grant additional facilities for transmitting small sums of money through the Post Office, *ordered* to be brought in by Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON and Lord JOHN MANNERS.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 62.]

ARTIZANS' DWELLINGS ACT (1868) AMENDMENT ACT (1879) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. TORRENS, Bill to explain and amend the twenty-second section of "The Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act (1868) Amendment Act, 1879," *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. TORRENS, Mr. GOLDNEY, and Sir THOMAS CHAMBERS.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 63.]

ELECTIVE COUNTY BOARDS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Major NOLAN, Bill to establish Elective County Boards in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Major NOLAN, Mr. FAY, Mr. O'CLERY, and Mr. O'SULLIVAN.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 64.]

BEER DEALERS' RETAIL LICENCES BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That the Chairman be directed to move the House, that leave be given to bring in a Bill for amending the Law relating to the grant by Justices of Certificates for Beer Dealers' Retail Licences.

Resolution *reported*:—Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. RITCHIE, Mr. GORST, Mr. TORRENS, and Mr. MUNDELLA.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 65.]

House adjourned at a quarter
before Three o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 10*th February*, 1880.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILL—*First Reading*—Workmen's Compensation (5).

QUEEN'S SPEECH—HER MAJESTY'S ANSWER TO THE ADDRESS.

THE LORD STEWARD (Earl BEAUCHAMP) *reported* Her Majesty's Answer to the Address, as follows:—

MY LORDS,

"I thank you sincerely for your loyal Address.

"I am confident that I can always rely upon your cordial co-operation and assistance in all measures which I may deem necessary for the safety of My Empire, and for the promotion of prosperity and concord among all classes of My People."

PERSIA AND HERAT.—QUESTIONS.

EARL GRANVILLE: My Lords, I rise for the purpose of putting a Question to the noble Earl at the head of the Government, of which I have given him private Notice. I wish to know, Whether there is any foundation for the announcement made to-day that Her Majesty's Government have released Persia from her Treaty engagements in regard to Herat?

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD: My Lords, in answer to the inquiry of the noble Earl, whether there is any truth in the statement that has been made that Her Majesty's Government have released Persia from her Treaty engagements not to enter Herat, I beg to state that there is no foundation for the statement. Your Lordships will remember that I intimated the other night, in speaking of the state of Afghanistan, that Her Majesty's Government were taking steps which they believed would lead to the settlement of that country, and that I might add those steps had been, in many instances, successful. During the time to which I am referring communications have been made from the Court of Persia to Her Majesty referring to their North-Eastern Frontier. There have been considerable communications on that subject, but nothing has been concluded. I am sure that, in these circumstances, your Lordships will show that confidence which is usually reposed in Her Majesty's Government, and will not press me for any details at the present moment beyond the statement I have made.

EARL GRANVILLE: Will Her Majesty's Government lay on the Table Papers relating to the character of those communications?

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD: No doubt Papers will be laid on the Table in due course; but it would now be inconvenient, and, I may say, injurious, to the public interests that those communications should be made known.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BILL.

BILL PRESENTED. FIRST READING.

EARL DE LA WARR, in presenting a Bill to amend the Law relating to the liability of Employers to make compensation for injuries sustained by persons in their service, said, that this measure, in principle and substance, was very much the same as the Bill which he introduced last year, and the stages of which last Session he postponed from time to time at the request of the noble and learned Earl on the Woolsack, in order to allow the Bill of the Government on the same subject to come up from the House of Commons. He regretted that he was not present yesterday when the noble and learned Earl made his statement. His Bill was based on the Report of the Royal Commission of 1877 on Railway Accidents and on the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons which sat in the same year. It consisted only of one clause, and its object was to make masters and employers, whether corporate bodies or not, liable for accidents which might occur to, and injury which might be sustained by, their servants in consequence of the neglect of persons to whom such masters and employers delegated their authority and supervision, and also to make them liable for defective machinery, plant, or anything connected with their works which might be a cause of injury to their servants. He would ask that his Bill should be allowed to go to a second reading, and then be referred to the same Select Committee as that to which the Bill introduced the previous night by the noble and learned Earl (the Lord Chancellor) was to be committed; but on the understanding that the whole Bill, and not merely a particular part of it, was to be sent to the Select Committee. He begged to move the first reading of the Bill.

Bill to amend the Law relating to the liability of Employers to make compensation for injuries sustained by persons in their service—*presented* (The Earl DE LA WARR.)

THE LORD CHANCELLOR said, that last Session the noble Earl produced to their Lordships a Bill on this subject, which, he presumed, from what the noble Earl had just said, was almost identical with the one which he was now laying on the Table. He stated at that time that the Bill of his noble Friend was not in accordance with the Report of the Select Committee of 1877, but was framed on the lines of a Report which that Committee had refused to adopt. He further stated that, therefore, it was not possible for Her Majesty's Government to support the Bill of his noble Friend, though there was a difficulty in stating their own views until their Bill on the subject reached their Lordships' House. His noble Friend had been good enough to defer the consideration of his Bill in the expectation that the measure of the Government would reach their Lordships' House, but it did not come up. He hoped, therefore, that his noble Friend would see that it would be impossible for Her Majesty's Government to adopt his suggestion and refer the Bill they had now before their Lordships and his noble Friend's Bill to a Select Committee. A Bill was referred to a Select Committee in order that evidence might be taken and that the Committee might go through the measure clause by clause. Of course, the object of referring the two Bills to the same Committee would be, not that they should be gone through clause by clause, but that the Committee should decide which Bill should be adopted. That, however, was really a question not for a Committee but for the House. He hoped, however, that his noble Friend would consent to serve on the Select Committee to which the Bill of the Government was to be referred, and then he would have an opportunity of proposing any Amendments which he might think advisable. He trusted, further, that his noble Friend would not consider it discourteous if he said that the Government could not consent to refer his Bill to a Select Committee.

LORD HOUGHTON said, he was not convinced by the remarks of the noble and learned Earl on the Woolsack. He thought it very important that those whose opinions were represented by the noble Earl (Earl De La Warr) should have their case heard by a Select Committee.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 1ª; to be *printed;* and to be read 2ª on *Thursday* next. (No. 5.)

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS — ELECTIONS OF GUARDIANS OF THE POOR —MOTION FOR RETURNS.

EARL FORTESCUE, in moving for Returns with reference to School Board elections and elections for Boards of Guardians, said, his object was to show that economy might be promoted without efficiency being impaired if the elections for the members of school boards were carried out on the same principle as those of Boards of Guardians. He had, from the first, protested against the adoption of the Ballot, as involving an expense utterly disproportionate to the ends to be attained; for a system which was good enough for the administration of the poor rates ought to be considered good enough for the administration of the school board rates, which, unduly high as they were, never reached anything like the amount of the poor rates. But whatever might have been said of the advantages of the Ballot system for the school boards when those bodies were first established, there no longer existed any good reason why the less expensive system of election in the case of Guardians should not be adopted in the case of the school boards, which had now generally little more than routine work to carry on.

Motion *agreed to.*

Return of the number of electors on the lists and the number of them who polled in each of the School Board elections contested in 1879 in England and Wales, and of the cost to the ratepayers of each such election: And

Similar Return with respect to the contested elections of guardians in 1879 in England and Wales.—(*The Earl Fortescue.*)

Return ordered to be laid before the House.

House adjourned at half past Five o'clock,
to Thursday next, half past
Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 10*th February*, 1880.

MINUTES.]—New Member Sworn—Edward Whitley, esquire, *for* Liverpool Borough.

Select Committee — Potato Crop, *appointed;* Printing, *appointed* and *nominated.*

Public Bills—*Ordered—First Reading*—Acrobatic Performances * [66]; Medical Act (1858) Amendment (No. 3) * [67].

Second Reading—Companies Acts Amendment [52]; Seed Potatoes (Ireland) [48].

QUESTIONS.

CARRYING OF ARMS—REVOLVERS.

Mr. GREGORY asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the increasing practice of carrying revolvers, and the mischief arising from it; and, whether the Government have any measure in contemplation for checking such practice by imposing a tax upon those weapons, or otherwise?

Mr. ASSHETON CROSS: I am informed that the existing law is sufficiently strong to deal with this class of case. It is as necessary to have a licence to carry a pistol or revolver as to carry a gun.

CRIMINAL LAW (IRELAND)—THE ASSAULT ON LORD FERMOY.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, If his attention has been called to the report of the proceedings at the last Winter Assizes at Limerick, where a man named James O'Shea was sentenced to five years' penal servitude for a common assault on Lord Fermoy; if it is true that O'Shea pleaded guilty to the offence, and that it was the first charge that was ever brought against him; and if, under all those circumstances, he will allow the sentence to be carried out?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Gibson): In answer to the Question of the hon. Gentleman, I have to say that the prisoner, whose name is John, not James, O'Shea, who had been a tenant of Lord Fermoy, was convicted not of a common assault, but for an assault occasioning actual bodily harm to Lord Fermoy. The assault was committed in the day-time on the steps of the Limerick Club House, the prisoner striking Lord Fermoy from behind on the head, close to the temple, with a stick. The full force of the blow was lessened by the hat which Lord Fermoy wore; but as it was he was knocked down on his hands and knees, and rendered partially insensible. The prisoner, who was defended by a solicitor, pleaded guilty. The learned Judge who presided—Mr. Baron Dowse—before passing sentence, called Lord Fermoy and another witness, and heard their evidence; and, with a full knowledge of the facts, considered, in his judicial discretion, that the ends of justice demanded the punishment which he awarded. In reference to the last portion of the Question, I have to say that an Attorney General has no power to alter or control the sentences pronounced on any prisoner; but from my knowledge of the learned Judge and the facts I have stated, I am sure he had ample grounds for the judgment which he pronounced.

NEW COURTS OF JUSTICE (BUILDINGS).

Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN asked the First Commissioner of Works, Whether he can state when the Royal Courts of Justice, at present in course of erection between Carey Street and the Strand, will be sufficiently completed to admit of judicial business being transacted therein?

Mr. GERARD NOEL: According to the contract, the Royal Courts of Justice should be completed by the end of the present year. Unfortunately, on account of the strike in the building trade and the protracted frosts of the two last years, the work has been considerably delayed; but rapid progress is now being made, and I hope before the end of the year 1881 the Courts will be sufficiently advanced to admit of judicial business being transacted therein.

SOUTH AFRICAN COLONIES (FINANCE).

Mr. WHITWELL asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If any financial settlement has been arrived at between the Home Treasury and our South African Colonies as to the large advances made by England in any of the completed wars there; and, if he will be able soon to lay a statement of such settlements upon the Table?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I am sorry to say that no financial settlement has yet been arrived at. Correspondence is still going on between the Home Government and the Colonial Government on the subject. The officers of the Government who have recently been out to South Africa in order to make inquiries have just returned, and are preparing their Reports, which will be laid before the Government in a very few days. I hope, when I have occasion shortly to make a general statement on the subject, to lay the settlements on the Table.

TURKEY—MURDER OF MR. OGLE.

MR. H. SAMUELSON asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he can at length state when the repeatedly promised inquiry into the murder of Mr. C. C. Ogle, "Times" Correspondent in Thessaly, by Turkish soldiers on March 30th 1878, will be instituted; whether steps will be taken to identify and bring to justice the perpetrators and instigators of the crime; and, whether, as has been done formerly in similar cases, an indemnity will be demanded from the Porte for the murdered Englishman's relatives? He had to add that he had received a letter that morning from the nearest relative of Mr. Ogle, in which the writer stated, very properly, that he did not wish to press for an indemnity, and therefore he begged to withdraw the latter part of his Question.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I have to express my great regret at the delay that has occurred with regard to this inquiry. I have to inform the hon. Member that, in consequence of application made by the friends of the late Mr. Ogle in the course of last month, instructions were addressed to Sir Henry Layard to the following effect:—

> "Your Excellency is aware that an assurance was given in the House of Commons by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the 14th of August, 1878, that the Government would be ready to advise the Porte to supplement the deficiencies of the evidence in regard to the manner in which Mr. Ogle met his death by a further investigation, whenever the state of the country should be such as to enable all the Greek witnesses to come forward without fear. In giving this promise, Her Majesty's Government considered themselves justified in counting upon the ready co-operation of the Porte, without which such an investigation could not, under any circumstances, be successfully conducted. They have hitherto abstained from taking any steps with this object, feeling convinced that the country in the neighbourhood of Volo and Macrinitza was still in too disturbed a state and public feeling too much excited to admit of a fuller and more minute inquiry than had already taken place. I am anxious now to learn your Excellency's opinion whether the conditions are more favourable, and whether it is probable that other witnesses would be willing to come forward and could do so with safety."

In reply to that letter, the following telegram was received from Sir Henry Layard a few days ago:—

> "I am unable to state with confidence whether Greek witnesses could come forward with safety or not; but I have no reason to think they would be in danger if proper means were taken to protect them. I question whether it would now be possible to have a full and impartial inquiry."

The Government feel that if a fresh inquiry is to be instituted it should only be done under conditions which give at least a reasonable certainty that it would be of a conclusive nature, and they think it necessary to await the Report of Her Majesty's Consul General at Salonica before coming to a decision.

MR. H. SAMUELSON asked when the Report of Her Majesty's Consul General might be expected?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I am unable to say precisely; but I hope soon.

LAW OF COPYRIGHT—LEGISLATION.

MR. HANBURY TRACY asked the Postmaster General, If it is the intention of the Government to introduce, early in the Session, a Bill to deal with the Law of Copyright?

LORD JOHN MANNERS, in reply, said, that in consequence of there being so many important measures to be introduced in the course of the present Session, and of the complexity of the problems connected with the subject of copyright, Her Majesty's Government thought it would be expedient to postpone introducing a Bill dealing with that subject till next Session.

PERSIA AND HERAT.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON: Sir, I wish to put a Question to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, of which

I have given him private Notice. I wish to ask him, Whether there is any foundation for the statement which appears in *The Times* newspaper of this morning to the effect that Her Majesty's Minister at Teheran has been instructed to inform the Government of Persia that Her Majesty's Government releases the Government of Persia from the engagement, under the Treaty of 1857, not to occupy Herat; and, if so, whether the Government will be prepared to lay the Correspondence on the subject upon the Table of the House?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: No, Sir, there is no foundation for it. There have been communications received from the Government of Persia, which have been duly taken into consideration. We have not yet come to any agreement; and we could not, without inconvenience, at the present time, make any statement on the subject.

BANKRUPTCY LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

MR. MUNDELLA: The Bankruptcy Law Amendment Bill stands as the first Order of the Day on Thursday next. The Bill itself has not yet been delivered to Members. May I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if it is intended to proceed with the measure before we have had an opportunity of seeing it? We at least ought to have the Bill in our hands.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I am informed that the Bill will be in the hands of the House tomorrow. It is our first business, however, to make progress with the Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill; and whether we are able to do that on Thursday must depend upon the progress we make with the debate on the Address.

PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he would appeal to hon. Gentlemen, as he did last night, with regard to this evening. The debate on the Address was still proceeding. As an Order of the Day, this being Notice day, it stood low down on the Paper. He would appeal to hon. Gentlemen who had Notices of Motion on the Paper to give way on this occasion, and allow the House to proceed with and finish the debate on the Address. He hoped the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell), and others who had Notices on the Paper, would be good enough to adopt that course.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL felt that the subject of which he had given Notice was not inferior to that which had occupied the House for the last two or three days. ["Oh!"] He said so decidedly; but he also felt it would not be convenient to interpolate the subject of which he had given Notice into the middle of another debate. Therefore, he yielded to the appeal made to him; but he hoped the Government would give him a very early day for the discussion of that important subject.

EVICTIONS (IRELAND).

MR. O'DONNELL gave Notice that on Thursday next he would ask the hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Plunket) a Question with regard to a statement made by the hon. and learned Member in reference to the Balla evictions. He would also ask the hon. and learned Member whether he had seen a letter signed by Mr. Walsh, President of the Balla Land League, in which that gentleman declared that, instead of only five evictions having taken place on the estate of Sir Robert Blosse, several hundreds had taken place? The hon. Member was proceeding to enter into details as to the number of holdings upon the Balla estate, when——

MR. SPEAKER said: I understand the hon. Member to give Notice of a Question which he wishes to put on Thursday next, and I must ask the hon. Gentleman to confine himself strictly to the form of the Question of which he desires to give Notice.

MR. O'DONNELL said, he was ready to bow to the ruling of the right hon. Gentleman. On the same day he would ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether his attention had been called to a letter in *The Freeman's Journal*, signed "Observer," and stating — [*Cries of* "Order!"] If hon. Members would leave it to the right hon. Gentleman in the Chair to keep the Order of the House, it would be much better. The letter stated that the ejectment of starving families was still taking place in Clare, and he wished to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he was prepared to include the evicting landlords among the recipients of public loans at 1 per cent? He also begged to give Notice that, on the second reading of the Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill, he would move that—

> "The relief of famine in any portion of the United Kingdom or Ireland is a matter of Imperial necessity, and that the charges might be defrayed out of the Imperial funds, and not out of a special Irish fund; and that this House cannot approve of the endowment of that class known as Irish landords under the pretext of relieving Irish famine."

ARMY—NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENTS IN THE FIELD.

Colonel STANLEY, referring to a report of the answer which he gave last night to the Question of the hon. Baronet the Member for Chelsea (Sir Charles W. Dilke), as to whether the rules concerning newspaper correspondents with British Armies in the field, published during the Recess, were to be looked upon as being still in force, explained that what he believed he said—and certainly what he intended to say—was, with regard to a Memorandum drawn up by some officers after the Russo-Turkish War as to the duties of correspondents in the field, that that Memorandum was provisionally approved by the Commander-in-Chief and by himself to the extent that a certain number of copies should be printed, but not issued. He also said that no rules had been published by his authority, either in relation to the Kaffir—not the Afghan—or the Zulu War.

MEETING OF THE HOUSE.

Resolved, That this House will meet To-morrow, at Two of the clock.—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

PARLIAMENT—PUBLIC BUSINESS.

Mr. FAWCETT asked whether, if the debate on the Address were concluded that evening, the Report upon the Address would be the first Business to-morrow?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, he understood that it would. In order to enable the House to resume the debate on the Address, he thought he ought now to move that the Orders of the Day be postponed until after the Order relating to the Address.

Mr. SPEAKER: The ordinary course would be to move that the Notices of Motion be postponed until after the Orders of the Day.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: Then I will take that course, and will move that the Notices of Motion be postponed until after the Orders of the Day.

Sir WILFRID LAWSON: Can that Motion be put without Notice to the House?

Mr. SPEAKER: If it is done with the general concurrence of the House. If there is any objection, the Motion cannot be made without Notice. It can only be made with the general concurrence of the House.

Sir WILFRID LAWSON: I have no objection, Sir. I only asked the question.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Ordered, That Notices of Motion be postponed till after the Orders of the Day.—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

COMPANIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

(*Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Coope, Mr. Herschell, Sir Charles Mills.*)

[BILL 52.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK said, that he did not wish to stand between the House and the adjourned debate on the Address, which in the present critical state of Ireland was, of course, of paramount importance; and, accordingly, if there was any desire to discuss the Bill on the second reading, he would willingly adjourn the consideration. At the same time, as it was substantially the same Bill as that which passed the House last year after considerable discussion, but without opposition, and which was only withdrawn in the Lords on account of the lateness of the Session, he hoped, perhaps, the House would agree to the second reading. So far as the enacting clauses went, the Bill was the same as last year; but they had adopted some suggestions of the learned Lord Advocate and of Lord Selborne, necessitating a majority of three-quarters of the shareholders in the case of any Company acting under the provisions of the Bill, giving certain rights to dissentient shareholders, and providing for full information. The Bill had been very carefully considered by high legal authority; he could assure the House that it was generally approved by commercial men, and he hoped, therefore, that the House would agree to the second reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir John Lubbock.*)

Mr. J. G. TALBOT said, that on the part of the Government he had no objection to the second reading, on the understanding that the Board of Trade were to be at liberty to introduce Amendments in Committee, if they saw necessity for so doing.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Friday.*

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [FOURTH NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [5th February].—[See page 69.]

And which Amendment was,

At the end of the Question, to add the words "We also think it right to represent to Your Majesty that Your Majesty's Government, although in possession of timely warning and information, have not taken adequate steps to meet promptly and efficaciously the severe distress now existing and increasing in Ireland; and we are of opinion that, in order to avert the horrors of famine from a wide area in that Country, the most vigorous measures are immediately necessary; and we are further of opinion that it is essential to the peace and prosperity of Ireland to legislate at once and in a comprehensive manner on these questions; and we humbly assure Your Majesty that we shall regard it as the duty of Parliament, on the earliest opportunity, to consider the necessary measures for the purpose, more urgently the tenure of land, the neglect of which by Parliament has been the true cause of constantly recurring dissatisfaction and distress in Ireland."—(*Mr. Redmond.*)

Question again proposed, "That those words be there added."

Debate *resumed.*

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: If the debate on the Amendment to the Address proposed by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) had been brought to a close last night—as the Government not unnaturally desired—there would have been the fact in connection with the debate which would have called for remark outside, and that is, though the discussion lasted two days, not one non-official English Member, with the exception of the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Hermon), took part in it. I think that silence may be attributed to two causes. In the first place, it arises out of the circumstances under which the Amendment has been introduced to the House; and, in the second place, because it had been drawn up on the other side of the House by the Irish Party, without the slightest concert with other Members. There seems to be the impression that no Englishman can express sympathy with Ireland or the Irish Members, or can co-operate with the Irish National Party for common objects, without its being supposed that he is tainted more or less with the terrible disease of Home Rule. In fact, the highest authority had characterized the man who did so as a traitor to his Queen and to his country. [*Cheers.*] I take that cheer as an emphasis of the statement. [Sir William Fraser: No, no!] I am very glad I was mistaken; because I should be very sorry that it should go forth to the Irish people that in the House sympathy with them is equivalent and tantamount to a political crime. In the speeches made of late, and in the articles in the organs of the Conservative Party, there has been something like an attempt to terrorize over the English Members, and to prevent them exhibiting the sympathy which they feel on Irish questions. This comes with extremely bad grace, for the Conservative Party have for years past played with every political agitation that has been excited. It was the Members of that Party who denounced, for instance, the agitation for the extension of the franchise, and then came over and granted it. It was they who denounced the proceedings of the trades unions and the object of those bodies; and it was they who, when they came into power, conceded to trades unions almost everything which they had previously condemned. Lastly, they had played into the hands of the publicans, and contracted with them a degrading alliance. I have never voted for inquiry into Home Rule, and I do not intend to do so; but, at the same time, I have not the slightest notion of blaming those who think differently and act honestly in the matter. For the last century we have been governing Ireland against its will, and not, I am afraid, to the advantage of this country. The Representatives of the Irish people ask us to concede to them what has been conceded to America, our own Colonies, and Canada, and say—"You may depend upon our loyalty and devotion to the Crown, and strict friendship with the English people." Under the existing system, in the early part of the connection between the two countries, the Irish nation suffered very grievous oppression and tyranny, which imperilled the prosperity of the country; and even at the present moment we know that they are suffering from disabilities, from disqualifications, from unequal laws, and from abuses which it is the duty of the House to consider and to remedy. And the only justification which I can allege for refusing to vote for Home Rule, or for an inquiry into its necessity, is this—that while I agree with what I believe to be the ends and objects which Home Rule is believed by the Irish Members to be likely to secure, I differ altogether with the means by which they propose to secure those ends and aims. I am willing to assist to redress any real grievance the Irish people have, and to make—as we ought to be ready to make—due allowance for the different sentiments between the English and Irish people. It seems to me that in the Amendment before the House there is an opportunity afforded to English Members to show in a practical form our sympathy with the Irish people by supporting it. What does the Amendment affirm? It affirms, for one thing, that the neglect of reform in the land tenure of Ireland is the cause of all this distress, and of the distress which so constantly occurs. I imagine that there will be a very general agreement on the point. I am not going to answer the various proposals for land tenure which have been placed before the House; but will be content with referring to that of my hon. Friend the Member for Reading (Mr. Shaw Lefevre), and my right hon. Colleague (Mr. Bright). If the scheme suggested by these hon. Gentlemen were carried out, that would, no doubt, have the effect of so far changing the tenure of land in Ireland as to make a large number of those who are tenants owners of the soil. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Plunket) told them the other night that the peasants of Ireland are now starving, and asked if it is conceivable that if they were owners of the soil they would be in any better position? The result of the experiments which have been made on a very considerable scale are altogether inconsistent with the contention of the hon. and learned Gentleman. Eight hundred tenants have become owners under the Bright Clauses of the Land Act, and 5,000 under the Church Act. Of the 800, up to the present time only 16 or 20 have failed to pay their instalments, even in the extraordinary time of distress; and of the 5,000, I am told that the number of defaulters is not a bit greater than the percentage of the richer landlords who have received grants in aid of drainage works and other improvements. Can anything be more satisfactory than that? The hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin has asked what the Irish tenants would do if they had not their landlords? But all landlords are not of the type described by the hon. and learned Member. There are absentee landlords, represented by agents, and there are bad landlords. Under the circumstances, it seems to me that the House will be acting consistently with what it has done in the past if it now accepts the latter part of the Amendment—that which has reference to the reform of land tenure. But since the discussion has largely turned upon the other portion of the Resolution, which says, in effect, that the measures that have been taken by the Government are inadequate, and that other measures are urgently necessary, after the debate last night, I venture to say that the Government stand self-convicted. I will show that the measures they have taken were inadequate. They were warned in the early autumn that this distress was impending over Ireland. They were warned by the Roman Catholic Bishops in Ireland during the Recess, and they were warned by a Memorial signed by 70 of the Irish Members; but these warnings were disbelieved; they were even ridiculed by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, who pointed to the large sums in the savings banks as a proof that there could not be any distress impending. I think it is perfectly clear that they have failed to adopt proper measures because of their not giving credence to the warnings; and in doing so they have justly and properly laid themselves open to the censure of the House. The Attorney General for Ireland said there are three facts which show that the Government has dealt practically and with vigour. In the first place, the dread of a fuel famine has fortunately passed away. But, in the name of common sense, are the Government going to take credit for the providential dispensation by which the fuel of the Irish people has been saved? As Sheridan said, when the Prince Regent took credit for measures with which he had nothing to do—"Yes; but what His Royal Highness particularly prides himself upon is the late excellent harvest." The Attorney General also argued that there was not a single workhouse full at the present time. Now, considering that everyone who knows anything about Ireland agrees in saying that the Irish people have a rooted terror of the workhouse, it is not surprising that many of them would even prefer death by starvation rather than go to the workhouse. The next statement of the Attorney General was more important. He says that not a single death has been authenticated as having occurred up to the present time in consequence of starvation or famine. Well, if this be true, and I assume that it is true—I believe my hon. Friends around me admit it—and if it be the work of the Government, and if it can be distinctly shown to result from the measures which they have taken, I will at once exonerate them from censure. What has been the action of the Government? Will any hon. Gentleman point to anything they have done which has saved the life of a single man in Ireland during the distress? Now, I would like to go into this matter a little more in detail. The Government do not seem certain of the position they have taken up. My right hon. Friend the Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster) referred last night to one or two things which he supposed they had done, and on account of which he was disposed to relieve them from all blame; but the Government got up and denied that they had done these particular things. The language of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the first night of the Session left this impression on my right hon. Friend the Member for Bradford. In the first place, my right hon. Friend referred to the fact that the Government had relaxed the provisions of the Poor Law; and I certainly understood from the words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that some measure of that kind had been adopted by the Government. But now we have the assurance of the Chief Secretary for Ireland that nothing of the kind has been done. Again, my right hon. Friend alluded to the accumulation of stores of food and fuel, which he considered was a matter of great importance, and which I think will yet be required to save the Irish people from death. The Chancellor of the Exchequer immediately rose and stated that this had not been done. They had only suggested it to Boards of Guardians, but it had not been carried out. From the report in *The Times* of his speech on Thursday, I find the Chancellor of the Exchequer said—

> "We have also directed our attention to another matter of great importance, that of outdoor relief."

Now, Sir, I ask the Government, in the first place, to tell me where, in the Correspondence, there appears the letter in which the Government warned the Boards of Guardians of the desirability of accumulating food and fuel? Of course, after the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I know this Correspondence does exist; and, as it has been quoted, I take it for granted that the Government will be prepared to lay it on the Table. There is another question to which I wish to call attention. How is it that every Board of Guardians throughout the whole length and breadth of Ireland simultaneously agreed that they would not provide stores of food and fuel? One would have thought that out of the hundreds some of them would have made this provision for their starving fellow-countrymen. It is extraordinary that it did not occur to one of the Boards to accumulate food and fuel, as suggested. It is perfectly clear that the fact that no Irish people have died of starvation is not due to the stores of food and fuel which Her Majesty's Government thought of providing. Then there remains another provision which the Government are said to have made. They have made arrangements under which applications have been received for loans amounting to £284,000. But how many of those applications have been complied with? How much money has been granted? The Circular of the Chief Secretary states that two instalments of the loan must be asked for and received before July 30. Well, then, how many of those instalments have been paid, and how much money has been put into the hands of the people who have asked for the loans? It will be correct to say that not more than £10,000, — probably not more than £1,000— has been expended up to the present time in relief works, so that the magnificent exertions of the Government amount to this—they have caused to be expended for the relief of the poor in Ireland less than the tenth of the sum which has been expended in private charity through the various charitable funds. Then, again, what is the charge made against the Government? It is not that they are charged with allowing deaths by actual starvation up to the present time; they are charged with not taking steps to prevent the deaths which would have taken place but for private charity; they are charged with having allowed a number of the Irish people to be so reduced by starvation that if an epidemic were now to occur the people would be swept away by tens of thousands. To this charge no adequate reply has been made. But then, it is asked, what more ought the Government to have done than they have done? Well, they should have done what they have done earlier than they have done it. They knew that, under the system of loans for improvements which they adopted, no considerable work of this kind could be carried out in less than six months, and yet they allowed six months to elapse without steps to relieve the people after they had received warning of what was coming on the country. Then they have not taken the right means to relieve the distress. What is their proposal? In order to relieve the distress of the tenants they make grants to the landlords. That is surely a great mistake. Is it not conceivable that, to put an extreme case, a speculator may take advantage of the proposal to lend money at 1 per cent, may obtain possession of a large tract of land, spend £10,000 or £20,000 in drainage, and then sell it four or five years afterwards for a profit of £100,000, which he would have taken out of the Church Surplus? It may be said that care will be taken that speculators do not receive these loans, but only *bonâ fide* landlords; but how are you to prevent bad landlords raising the value of their property, and then racking their tenants again, with the produce of the money that you have lent them at the expense of the people of Ireland or of the Church Fund? Such a course would only be justifiable if the necessity were so extreme that the Government were obliged to take all the plans that occurred and work them all together. But that is not the case, for the Government have neither accumulated stores of fuel nor relaxed the Poor Law. In fact, the Government are utterly inconsistent. They have not done what they ought to have done, and they have done what they ought not to have done. Take the precedents of the Indian Famine and the Lancashire Cotton Famine. In India we did not grant money to the Zemindars to improve their property, but granted money for public works, to be carried out under public supervision for the benefit of the district and not of the landlords. What did the experienced men who administered the cotton famine private fund do for the relief of the district? They established public works, and did not grant a penny to a Lancashire manufacturer to improve his machinery or build a new mill. Had they done so, the flow of private charity would soon have stopped, as it should have done. The Government might also have granted, not only seed potatoes, but seeds of all kinds to re-stock the land for the benefit of the people. That was found the most beneficial and the least pauperizing way of relieving the distress of the French peasants after the Franco-German War and the inundations. There is reason to fear that it may now be too late to do this; but, still, it is to be hoped that the subject will receive the serious and earnest consideration of the Government. My right hon. Friend the Member for Bradford has expressed an opinion that it is undesirable to censure the Government, but that the House should rather relieve them from the responsibility they have incurred. Well, without questioning the wisdom of the advice, it may be offered to hon. Gentlemen opposite as another open question in the Liberal Party. But it must be borne in mind that it will be no satisfaction to the people who are perishing from starvation to tell them that if they perish the House of Commons will hereafter censure the Government. It seems far better the House should impress on the Government a due sense of the gravity of the occasion by censuring them for what they have neglected in the past. They have not done enough, and what they have done they have done badly. They have shown a disposition to tide over the question with temporary expedients, and to ignore the real root of the mischief which lies in the system under which the Irish cultivator is deprived of any incentive to thrift, and of any real interest in the profit of the land. I shall give my vote in support of the Amendment.

SIR WALTER B. BARTTELOT, referring to the speech of the hon. Member who had just sat down, said, they would have more than enough to occupy them for many nights if they were to go into that vast, most difficult, most unfortunate question — the Irish Land Question. When the hon. Member rose he expected to hear from him a speech on the subject of the distress, and not one about the extraneous matters which the hon. Member had referred to. He could agree with the hon. Member, when he said that the Government would not be open to blame if it could be shown that no deaths had, up to this moment, arisen from actual starvation; and, as a matter of fact, no deaths from starvation had up to that time occurred. As to the speech delivered yesterday by the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition, he was of opinion that it must have commended itself to all who had heard it; and he believed that the views of the noble Lord with regard to the distress would be felt to be true by the great majority of the people of the United Kingdom. He had risen to express his conviction that everyone who sat in that House took as much interest as could be felt by any man in the welfare and well-being of Ireland. He had been present in Ireland during the famine-time between 1845 and 1847, and he could testify to the horror and dismay which it occasioned. The scenes which he then beheld were of such a nature as to cause him to feel the deepest sympathy with Ireland on the present occasion. They must all approach the question with every desire to do justice to Ireland, and to alleviate the distress which was now raging in certain parts of Ireland. The hon. and learned Member for Limerick (Mr. O'Shaughnessy) had said that the Government should at once have taken in hand the construction of public works in that country. Now he (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) thought that the Government would have acted precipitately if they had gone into these works without considering whether they would have been of advantage to the country; because he had seen with his own eyes how money had been absolutely wasted during the Famine of 1846 and 1847, when, in all directions, absolutely nothing was done by the men who were employed, and paid by the day, the works not being done by contract. These men simply did as little as possible. One particular case he remembered where men would neither work nor go into the Union workhouse, but demanded out-door relief. Their application having been refused, a violent attack had been made on the authorities of a Union workhouse; and he, among others, had been engaged in quelling the disturbance. Was that, he would ask, a state of things which hon. Gentlemen opposite would like to see recur? He was, of course, perfectly well aware that great distress existed in certain portions of Ireland; but it could not be denied that since 1849 the prosperity of the country generally had greatly increased, and that there were portions of it in a better condition than a large part of the agricultural districts in this country. In Mayo there was an estate of something like 8,000 acres, with 250 tenants, who each paid not more than £2 10*s*. a-year in the shape of rent, and he should like to know how they were to live? Was it matter for wonder that properties of that kind were subjected to intermittent famine? His hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) must know perfectly well that whatever amount of relief was given to people so situated distress must again come upon them unless something were done to raise them to a different position. He agreed with the noble Lord at the head of the Opposition, and also with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster), that the sole responsibility in this question rested with the Government; and he maintained that their action had been throughout judicious and prudent. He should, he might add, like to know whether everything that was possible had been done in Ireland itself to alleviate the distress; because private charity ought, he thought, to step in before the public funds were expended for the purpose. He was well aware that the hon. Member for Galway (Mr. Mitchell Henry) had done his duty in that direction well and nobly; but every landlord was not in the same position, and he must know that those whom he relieved had been for generations in a state of chronic misery. As to the Government, he was of opinion that, while taking care not to go too fast, they ought even to strain a point in order to place themselves in a position to meet every emergency as it arose. Their duty was to prevent the people from being starved, while taking care that the public money was not lavishly and recklessly expended.

Mr. LAW said, that no one could doubt that the Government had a sincere desire to prevent the more serious consequences of famine; but, still, it seemed to him that Irish Members might be pardoned if they felt a little more anxious upon the subject than right hon. Gentlemen opposite. The Irish Local Government Board had, in their Reports, informed the Government, as early as the end of October, that the yield of the potato crop in Ireland would not be more than one-half, although they stated that the crop of oats was likely to be abundant. To the poor tenants, however, the former crop was everything; and now it appeared from the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that last year's potato crop was only about one-third of the average, which really meant that in the less favoured parts of the country—as, for example, the Western seaboard—the crop had almost entirely failed. The result, then, being an almost complete failure of the crop, particularly in the West of Ireland, the question was not so much one for the future as for the present, and no time must be lost in dealing with the impending starvation. More effective measures were necessary, and something more was required than correspondence. If the Government had given directions that the harsh and cruel provisions of the Irish Poor Law, practically forbidding all out-door relief to the able-bodied, might be relaxed, the alarm which was felt as to the condition of the country would have been very much relieved. The Government, indeed, seemed, notwithstanding all the warnings they had received, to have determined, even as lately as the middle of November, that there should be no such out-door relief; thus showing how little they had realized the probable intensity of the distress. But if, when they had at last made up their minds that they would take prompt measures of relief, they had announced that out-door relief might be given to the suffering farmers, it would have given much satisfaction. Now, it was with reference to this matter that he chiefly rose; because he did not believe that hon. Gentlemen were at all aware of the very great difference that existed in the Poor Law systems of England and Ireland. In England the Guardians had what he might call absolute discretion; they might give out-door relief or in-door relief just as they liked, with this restriction—that as regarded able-bodied persons half the relief should be in food, and they must employ the labour test. But even that they might dispense with for a certain time if they so reported to the Local Government Board; so that in England they had complete means of dealing with the necessities of the people according as distress arose. But how was it in Ireland? In consequence of certain hard cast-iron rules, neither the Guardians nor the Local Government Board had practically any power to order out-door relief to able-bodied men. The Guardians in Ireland might give such relief to persons permanently disabled, or suffering from severe disease—it was curious that intensive adjectives were so frequently applied in Irish matters—or to a widow with two or more children. But they were unable to give one atom of relief to any able-bodied person unless the workhouse was full, or contained within its walls such infectious disease as would render it dangerous to send any person into it. That appeared to him to be a state of the law which was wholly unsuited to times like the present; indeed, he would venture to say, unsuited to any times. Why, he would ask, should there be such a striking difference between the Poor Law system of Ireland and that of England, on which it was supposed to be modelled? Why might out-door relief be given to a widow during the first six months of her widowhood in England but not in Ireland? Why to a widow with one child in England, but only to a widow with two or more children in Ireland? Why to the wives and families of absent soldiers and sailors, or marines, if they were fortunate enough to be English, but not if they were Irish? And, finally, why should English Guardians be free to give out-door relief to all persons, able-bodied as well as others, at their discretion; whilst such relief was restricted in Ireland within narrow statutory limits? According to the latest Returns, of the whole population of wealthy England, about 3 per cent were a charge on the land; whilst in Ireland, steeped as part of it was in comparative poverty, and with perpetual risk of recurring famine, the Poor Law relief represented only 1½ per cent of the population. In England the in-door relief was, in round numbers, 170,000, and the out-door relief 570,000; whilst in Ireland the in-door relief was 50,000, and the out-door relief only 36,000. Referring to the question of agriculture, the right hon. and learned Gentleman stated that the class who would here be known as agricultural labourers were in Ireland really the small tenants, and, therefore, on that class it was particularly harsh only to grant them in-door relief; the more especially as even that was not open to them unless they gave up their farms. The workhouse was, no doubt, a good test for distinguishing the honest pauper from the scheming tramp; but it could not be applied with justice to the poorer Irish peasantry he had referred to as belonging to the class of small farmers. Under such circumstances as unhappily now existed in Ireland, he thought the Government should reconsider the question. Why not, in the name of common sense, intrust the Local Government Board with power to relax those harsh rules, and thus relieve the Guardians of the odium which they incurred by seeming to refuse out-door relief in cases where it would be given in England as a matter of course? The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Plunket) had referred to the example of an Irish landlord who was loved and esteemed by his tenantry. That, however, was, he feared, an exceptional instance. He would ask how many landlords holding property in Mayo went with open hand and kindly speech among their admiring and grateful tenants? But there was one other point of difference between the Poor Law systems of Ireland and England which he (Mr. Law) desired to notice. In England clergymen were admitted on Boards of Guardians; but the Irish law was different, all ministers of religion were alike ineligible, and thus a class intimately acquainted with the wants of the people were excluded from giving their experience and advice to the official distributors of State assistance. Yet under the Relief Act of 1847, and now again in the distribution of the charitable funds collected by her Grace the Duchess of Marlborough, and by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, it had been found necessary and desirable to seek the aid of the clergy for this purpose. Their original exclusion was avowedly only for a time, and he (Mr. Law) saw no reason why it should not now be done away with. A great deal had been said about the revolutionary principles which had been broached in this debate; but the only things that seemed to be regarded in that way by hon. Gentlemen opposite were that the Irish Members asked for the experiment of a peasant proprietary and for the extension of the Ulster tenant right custom to the rest of Ireland. These might be revolutionary principles; but, if so, the revolution was of a very mild type. The propriety of the first had been affirmed by unanimous resolution of the House last Session; and the only objection to the second seemed to him to be the difficulty of effecting it. If there had been any unnecessary warmth or strength of expression on the part of any hon. Members, he (Mr. Law) must say it had been first imported into the discussion by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite. As to the agitation in certain parts of Ireland last autumn, the strong censure which had been passed upon its authors was, no doubt, well deserved. But, so far as the peasantry themselves were concerned, it should be recollected that popular commotions generally arose, not so much from any desire of mischief on the part of the people, as because their difficulties and sufferings were often hard to bear. A starving people might readily listen to proposals that were impracticable, or, perhaps, in the direct line to disorder or even crime; and yet, after all, how little had the Irish tenantry yielded to the temptations which had been presented to them. For this he (Mr. Law) thought they deserved great credit, as had, indeed, been observed by the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition. It was, at all events, a little too much to say, as the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland had done, that this land agitation had been the cause of the impending famine. He greatly feared that the Government had not been as much alive to the necessities of the case as they ought to have been. No doubt they had accepted full responsibility for what they had done, and also for what they had omitted to do; and a very sharp account would be demanded of them if, in the end, their measures proved inadequate.

MR. ERRINGTON said, that notwithstanding all the statements they had heard, and even the appeal made to them on behalf of Her Majesty's Government by his right hon. Friend the Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster), he was obliged to express his strongest and most cordial concurrence with the Vote of Censure, which was not implied in the Resolution, but was actually and intentionally expressed. It was with sincere regret that he had to speak in that way on that occasion, for it was an occasion far too melancholy to be devoted to a mere Party quarrel. He should have been glad if the measures that had been taken were such that each of the Irish Members, on whichever side of the House they might be, could have united cordially in approving of them. The Press, when they complained as they had done, and accused them of faction in moving the Amendment to the Address, lost sight of the really important gist of the question, and that was the very exceptional and grave character of the troubles impending in Ireland. Unless they succeeded by the painful process of three or four nights' debate in opening the eyes of the Government, he was afraid that the consequences would be of a very serious nature indeed. The Irish Members had been greatly disappointed at the meagre references in the Queen's Speech to Ireland, and that disappointment had spread to Ireland, where it was producing much discouragement. When the distress first appeared the Government was duly warned by the Irish Members; but their recommendations were received with, to say the least, incredulity, and the Government had not succeeded in checking in any way the progress of the distress. When, however, it became so notorious as to excite sympathy and lead to private charity on a large and generous scale all over the world, they naturally thought that the eyes of the Government would be opened, and that probably the Government were reserving themselves for the graceful occasion of the Royal Speech to announce measures worthy of the question with which they had to deal. But they found the Irish Question dismissed in a few brief words. Nor were the Irish Members the only people who complained. He was reading the other day in a leading weekly London paper, which was certainly not chargeable with undue Irish proclivities, a strong comment on so much of the Royal Speech being devoted to a long explanation of matters which everyone knew all about, while the important matter of Irish distress had been disposed of in a few words. Under these circumstances, his hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) was not only justified but absolutely called upon to take the course he had adopted, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had fully admitted the justice of that course. But if the right hon. Gentleman thought that the question was so important as to justify the very unusual course of moving an Amendment to the Address, surely he might have a little more considered its importance when the Queen's Speech was being drawn up, and might have treated it as a question of first-class Imperial magnitude. It might be said that this was merely a matter of form, but a matter of form was not without its importance; and he could assure the House that it would have been a great matter of encouragement to the unfortunate people of Ireland to think that their Rulers were fully conscious of the gravity of the case, and had shown their consciousness by giving to it adequate importance in the Royal Speech, and by mentioning that measures had been taken calculated to meet the emergency. Of course, the real question was, after all, what remedial measures had been adopted? Irish Members were accused of merely complaining of the past; but it must be remembered that the Government were not prepared to admit what Irish Members considered to be their great responsibility in regard to the past. He complained that in the measures taken by the Government what should have been merely supplementary stood by itself. With regard to the scheduling of districts, the distress, of course, varied in different districts. In some districts there was comparatively little distress, while in other districts the distress was extreme, and it became important that the facilities for scheduling should be ample. He was afraid that want of appreciation of the gravity of the crisis had been shown by extreme rigidity being manifested in this respect. Two applications were made by the Longford Union to be scheduled, and both applications were refused—that was to say, the authority of the Inspector sent down was placed against that of the local people, who were thoroughly conscious of the state of the country, and anxious that relief should be afforded. His hon. Friend the Member for Galway (Mr. Mitchell Henry) had made some strong observations with regard to some of the Inspectors sent down; and certainly the case of Longford fully justified the charges made of inexperience and unfitness for their duties. He would strongly urge on the Chief Secretary for Ireland to consider whether it would not be wise and expedient to relax the extreme severity of the conditions under which relief was given, and especially to consider favourably the repeated applications of the Longford Union? The Chancellor of the Exchequer had given the key to the severity when he said that private charity was a very different thing from public charity, and that the shortcomings, if any, of the Government were not due to any want of sympathy, but the Government had a very great responsibility not to pauperize the people, and that the action of the Government should be ascribed, not to hard-heartedness, but to hardheadedness. He agreed that the Government must be careful not to pauperize the people; but he would ask if that was the only responsibility which rested on the Government? Was it prudent for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to lay so much stress on that responsibility, and by so doing to incur, perhaps, the far greater responsibility for severe distress and possibly for loss of life? He should also like to ask what security there was when districts were scheduled as distressed that the amount of money applied for or granted in any one bore any sort of proportion to the distress to be relieved? In one Union there might be a great deal of distress, and very few landlords willing or able to apply, while in other districts less distressed there might be many landlords willing and able to do so; so that even when the districts were registered as distressed the remedy was one that worked very much by chance. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said he thought, the other day, that about £330,000 had been applied for, and on the previous night the First Lord of the Admiralty said that the sum applied for had risen to £400,000.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: The £330,000 was the sum applied for by landlords, and the rest is a sum applied for as sanitary advances.

Mr. ERRINGTON said, he was anxious to know whether every Union scheduled as distressed had made some application, and what proportion the amount applied for bore to the distress and to the population of the Union? He had moved for a Return to show the manner in which the system of relief had worked, and he hoped that they should have that Return as soon as possible. The absence of such information showed that the Government had not appreciated the gravity of the question; for he should have supposed that, as a matter of course, they would have been presented with fortnightly Returns, showing the progress of the distress, the amount of loans, and the amount of money devoted to charitable purposes. The progress of the distress had actually been more rapid than the Irish Members themselves had expected, and nobody could tell what would be the cost of meeting it for the next few months. They were told last night by the First Lord of the Admiralty that the Government accepted the entire responsibility of the situation; but that did not relieve Irish Members of their responsibility. He did not think that they realized the full pressure of the calamity; and, therefore, he thought it was the duty of the Irish Members to continue to press on the Government the fears which they entertained. The scheme of the Government was open to much objection. They had acted with great stringency for fear of pauperizing the people, and now they might be obliged to adopt a system infinitely more pauperizing to keep the people alive. The Local Government Board had been told that if famine were impending they might take certain further measures for giving relief; but the famine was not "impending," it was actually existing. It was quite true that so far no coroner's jury had returned a verdict of "manslaughter against Her Majesty's Government," as was done in several instances in 1847; but was that what the Government were waiting for before they recognized the existence of famine and took measures to save the people? He did not say that any deaths had occurred absolutely from starvation, and with such suddenness as to call for an inquest; but there was ample evidence to prove that several deaths had occurred which were directly traceable to the effects of starvation. Some of the English newspapers, when it was known in England that a serious calamity threatened Ireland, sent over to Ireland men of cultivation and ability, who went about the country and made a most interesting investigation, the good effects of which would not soon be forgotten in Ireland. In the printed letter of one of these correspondents he found a story of a woman who, with three children, walked 40 miles to a workhouse, one of the children dying shortly after admission. Everything led to the conclusion that things would be very much worse, and he could not help being reminded directly by the course of events of a painful history which they all remembered; but he hoped the resemblance might not go further than it had already gone. He alluded to the last Famine in India. They all remembered that the crops had failed, and that there was great apprehension of famine. They were then informed that the Government were confident of being able to grapple with the distress; but it soon became known that the distress was worse than the Government had ever admitted. The Government next said that no deaths had occurred; but they all knew that soon after there came a climax to the distress, and the direct loss to the nation in lives was reckoned by hundreds and thousands, while the indirect loss from consequent exhaustion and disease must have reached a much higher point. He sincerely hoped that the parallel might not go any further in the case of Ireland. So far the past was exceedingly ominous, and the outlook most gloomy. At all events, Irish Members had no choice except to press upon the Government the extent and urgency of the distress; and if, forewarned as they were, they neglected to adopt measures sufficient to cope with the danger, he did not know what language would be too strong to condemn their conduct.

MR. SHEIL remarked that, whatever might be the opinion of the hon. and gallant Member for West Sussex (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) upon the speech of the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), the Irish Members could not have two opinions upon the subject. It was an eloquent speech, a good speech, and a courageous speech. As to the rest of the remarks of the hon. and gallant Baronet, they were interesting, but not very much to the point. He referred to the Famine of 1846-7, and the distress at present existing in Mayo; but as to how the distress should be met he omitted to say one word. The right hon. and learned Member for Londonderry (Mr. Law) also indulged in a discursive and eloquent speech in reference to Boards of Guardians, the land system, and other matters; but he did not quite tell the House how he intended to vote. He wished he could say the same thing about the speech of the right hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster). He had told the House that he did not intend to vote against the Government. It seemed to him that such action on the part of the right hon. Gentleman was rather remarkable, and decidedly to be regretted, because it was evident that he was not thoroughly posted in the subject under discussion, and that he had made up his mind before actually the debate had been concluded. The right hon. Gentleman imagined that in various parts of Ireland there were accumulated large supplies of food and fuel; but he was corrected by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose statement was not that there were large supplies of food and fuel collected, but that the communications had been so perfected that these supplies could be promptly obtained if necessary. The right hon. Gentleman also imagined that the Guardians had power to relax the restrictions on out-door relief; but there again he was corrected. It was rather strange that the right hon. Gentleman, labouring, as he undoubtedly was, under these delusions, and having formed his opinion under an entirely wrong impression, should then turn round and say to the Irish Members before the debate had concluded—"As you have not proved your charge, I cannot vote for you." The First Lord of the Admiralty had objected entirely to a system of public works, seemingly ignoring the fact that the relief works might be useful ones. That was a very important point to bear in mind; because he quite agreed that relief, if purely relief and having no use, might demoralize, and do no good. The First Lord of the Admiralty argued as against railways that when he was in Dublin he heard of the contract of a work undertaken by the Corporation being given to a Scotchman, that if railways were undertaken contracts must be made, and that assumed that Irishmen would not be employed. He could tell the right hon. Gentleman that although the contract in Dublin had been given to a Scotchman the men who would execute the work would be Dublin workmen, and so it would be in Mayo and Connemara, no matter who the contractor was. The noble Lord who led a portion of the Opposition had not told them very much as to his views on the question before the House. He was more concerned about clearing himself of any connection with the defeated candidate for Liverpool. He (Mr. Sheil) agreed with the Attorney General that it would have been better if the Amendment had been shorter and more to the point—that was to say, if the Amendment had merely consisted of a Vote of Censure, pure and simple, upon the Government, and that the remaining question as to land should be raised separately and in another form. At any rate, the main question before the House was a Vote of Censure upon the Government in regard to what they had done in the past, or rather what they had omitted to do. When the right hon. Member for Bradford said the charge had not been proved it might be that he was right, because all sorts of extraneous subjects had been introduced into the debate. It seemed to him, however, that if the debate had been long and tedious, the chief blame ought to fall upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was quite in his power to have made the statement which he made on the second night of the debate upon the first night; and no good reason had been given why Papers which were now in their possession had not been circulated earlier. The hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis) said the actual gist of the Amendment was a Vote of Censure upon Her Majesty's Government, and so he (Mr. Sheil) ventured to say it was. As to how it would end, that they knew. But what they had to do was to prove the charge, and he would endeavour to show that Her Majesty's Government had not in the past acted up to a full sense of their responsibility; but, on the contrary, had been neglectful of what they ought to have done. The figures of the Registrar General showed the state of Ireland during the year 1879, and the Government must have been aware of it. That official said—

> "The extent of land under crops is less this year than in any of the preceding 10 years. The estimated agricultural produce returns were lower than any of the preceding 10 years in 1879. The total value of the principal crops in Ireland may be taken at £22,743,000 as against £32,758,000 in the preceding year, showing a diminution during the last year of £10,000,000 sterling. The average estimated produce of potatoes during the last 10 years was 6,065,200 cwt., whereas the yield in 1879 was only 22,273,000 cwt., showing the vast diminution of over 38,000,000 cwt. during the past year."

From these facts, the Government must have known in what a bad state the country was, and the charge against them was that they had neglected to do their duty. Under the circumstances, the Government could not plead that they had not been fully warned of the terrible state of the country; for they had been informed of it by their own officials, by the Roman Catholic Bishops, Poor Law Guardians, Corporations, and the large majority of the Irish Members of Parliament. After some correspondence, which went on till November 14, the Government saw the danger of further delay, and began to take active measures. Then came their conduct with reference to the granting of loans, of which, by the way, the Chief Secretary for Ireland had omitted to state in his speech the actual amount granted. They drew up, to use their own expression, a very carefully-worded Circular, and offered facilities for loans on easy terms—facilities, however, which to the majority of landowners would be entirely useless. At last it dawned upon the Lord Lieutenant that that was the case, and on January 17 further facilities were offered when it was too late. That was the gist of his charge against the Government, that their action was too late. It might be true, perhaps, that as yet no deaths from famine had occurred; but there could be no moral doubt that before long either starvation itself, or some diseases resulting from it, would tell their own tale. Those were grave charges to make against a Government; but he thought that they had been made tolerably clear. The responsibility lay mainly with the Viceroy and the Chief Secretary for Ireland. That right hon. Gentleman had a seat in the House, and should have made a further statement than that of Friday night; nor need he have apologized for detaining them, even at a late hour, for a few minutes; but the right hon. Gentleman had many other cares pressing upon him as the representative of the Jockey Club in the House of Commons.

MR. ASSHETON thought that English Members might express their opinions on the affairs of Ireland as freely as on those of Zululand or Afghanistan, especially as the House had the advantage of the presence of many Gentlemen who were ready to give their personal experiences of the country, and as very full sources of information were open to everyone. They had constantly been told that Irish tenants were over-rented, and had no security for improvements—that, in fact, they could not and did not improve their holdings. It did not appear on inquiry that there was, after all, so complete an absence of confidence between landlords and tenants. He had been reading in *The Times* a series of letters on Irish farming, and gathered from them that in many districts the rents were very moderate, and the tenants habitually improved their land. In one case, in the county of Roscommon, the tenant lived prosperously on six narrow fields, which had been reclaimed, and were chiefly under spade husbandry. Suitable buildings had been put up, and there was also a capital fruit garden. The extent of the holding was nine acres, and the rent, which had not been changed for the last 20 years, was nearly three guineas. In another instance, the occupier—a tenant of the hon. Member for Roscommon—held 5½ acres, which he had reclaimed, at the annual rent of £1; another paid £8 for 11½ acres, of which eight were reclaimed land. Numerous other cases could be adduced. One great cure for the present unfortunate state of things in many parts of Ireland was confidence between landlord and tenant; but that confidence was impossible as long as discontent was excited by the efforts of agitators. Confidence on the part of tenants would produce justice on the part of landlords, as it did in England, and also in Ireland among the tenants of the hon. Member for Roscommon (the O'Conor Don). The hon. and learned Member for Kildare (Mr. Meldon) asked the other evening why the Government did not relieve tenants by advancing money to them, in order to enable them to improve their farms. If the hon. and learned Gentleman had paused for a moment, he would have seen that he was mixing up the idea of charity with that of business. The proposal to advance money to the landlords to be spent in permanent improvement came under the head of matters of business, and this was a just and good way of helping those who had credit, but who had not the ready money available for the purposes required. The State could always borrow money more cheaply than individuals; and it often did borrow money and lend it to individuals or corporations possessing good security. Money had been lent to landlords in England and Scotland for draining, repairs of roads, &c., and in a similar way had been largely lent to corporate bodies for necessary improvements. In all these cases there was sufficient security; but this could not be said of the Irish tenants, to whom it was impossible that the State could lend money without security. If a tenant took the money before he made the improvements, what was to hinder him from bolting with it? On the other hand, the tenant could not effect the improvements unless he was provided with money in the first instance. He could not help thinking, therefore, that the plan of lending money to the tenants must be a delusion and a snare. He had been puzzled to hear the hon. Member for Birmingham, who opened the adjourned debate, deprecate lending money to landlords, his reason being that the landlords themselves made money out of the loans, while he had pointed out that during the cotton famine in Lancashire the Government had not lent money to the manufacturers in order that they might keep their mills going; but had the Government lent money to the millowners the only result would have been that the mills would have been kept open for a little while longer, and then there would have been an end of the matter. The case was different with regard to land. If money were lent to the landowners to make roads and drain the land, not only would the peasantry be paid fair wages for the work they did, and thus be enabled to tide over the existing difficulty, but permanent improvements would thereby be effected, which would be calculated to aid the future prosperity of the country. Therefore, there was a great difference between lending money to landowners and lending it to owners of mills, and this difficulty the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) had entirely overlooked. He wished the House to practically consider the position in which it was at the present placed. An Amendment had been moved to the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne; and if the Amendment were not withdrawn, which, in his opinion, was the most sensible course that could be pursued, and it should be lost, as it, no doubt, would be by an overwhelming majority, it would be made to appear to the world that that large majority was opposed to the claims set up by the supporters of the Amendment on behalf of the people of Ireland. This would be putting the House in a false position. But, supposing the Amendment were carried, the result would simply be that no Business could go on in the House for the next six or seven weeks, and the valuable measures about to be proposed by the Government and by private Members would have to be dropped and put off; and by whom would they be put off? Why, by that section of Gentlemen who sat opposite, and who called themselves the friends of Ireland.

Mr. D. O'CONOR, in supporting the Amendment, said, that it conveyed exactly the feeling which was entertained by a great many Members in regard to the conduct of the Government. He regretted to find from the course taken that a great many hon. Gentlemen, as well as the Government, had not thoroughly realized the extent and severity of the distress in Ireland; and he hoped that before the debate had been finally closed a considerable amount of knowledge would have been spread on the subject. He complained of the manner in which the distress had been alluded to in the Queen's Speech, which stated that—

> "Serious deficiency in the usual crops in some parts of Ireland has rendered necessary special precautions on the part of my Government to guard against the calamities with which those districts were threatened."

This was most inadequate, merely conveying an idea that only in some portion of Ireland that deficiency had taken place, whereas the "serious deficiency" had been all over Ireland, but had not been felt with so much severity in certain places where there was wealth. Then the Queen's Speech went on to refer to the calamities with which these districts were threatened, thereby suggesting that the difficulties were over, and that measures had been taken to meet these calamities. This was a most inadequate description of the state of Ireland. They had to meet a state of things which would require every exertion of the Government in order adequately to cope with the distress, and in a few months it would be found very much worse than it had been. He had looked carefully through the Papers which had been delivered to them to show what the Government had done, but could not find that anything else had been done but to provide accommodation within the workhouses. Everyone knew the antipathy the Irish people had against the workhouse—that they would rather starve than enter the workhouse—certainly, that they would only resort to that alternative when they had arrived at the point of starvation. The difficulty was under the existing Poor Law in Ireland to give adequate relief outside the workhouse without infringing the Poor Law regulations, and the Government said that they had given instructions to Boards of Guardians to relax these rules. That was a good step to take; but, as a matter of fact, these instructions were unknown to any of the Boards of Guardians in Ireland. He would give an instance which occurred in the county which he had the honour to represent some weeks before the granting of those facilities had been publicly announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in a speech he made at Stroud. A Guardian of the Sligo Union stated to the Board that several families on the coast who lived by fishing were in a state of great destitution, and that there was an urgent necessity for their receiving relief. The Board directed the relieving officer to use his discretion in the granting of out-door relief; but on learning how matters stood the Local Government Board in London informed the Sligo Board of Guardians that in no circumstances could relief be given in the manner they proposed. The Chairman of the Board proceeded to Dublin, and laid the facts before the authorities there; but he was obliged on his return to inform the Board of Guardians that there were no means of affording relief to the poor people in question unless they gave up their plots of lands and became inmates of the poorhouse. The consequence was that they had since been supported and saved from pauperism by charitable funds raised by the Guardians and throughout the county. No thanks, certainly, were due to the Government that deaths from starvation had not occurred in that community. With regard to the system of granting loans to landlords for the purpose of executing works on their estates, and thereby improving them, he had no objection to that; but the facilities offered for borrowing money, under the first Circular issued by the Government, were totally inadequate to meet the exigencies of the case. The terms first offered were not such as to invite applications, and to be really effectual the employment ought to have been afforded at the earliest possible moment; for, as the hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Plunket) had said, half-starved men could not travel long distances to work, and if they could, would not be employed by contractors. He did not know that in a single case the men were, up to this, actually engaged in the works for which the money was borrowed by the landlords. Meantime the people were idle, and were being gradually reduced to a state of starvation. So much for the first portion of the Amendment, which condemned the Government for not having taken the necessary steps to relieve the distressed. The next part of the Amendment referred to the permanent condition of Ireland. Now, he might state that he had taken no part in the agitation in the autumn and winter in the Western districts in Ireland; but he had no hesitation in expressing his opinion that it would be best for the interest of the country if the theory propounded throughout the West of Ireland were adopted — namely, that he who tilled the soil should also be the owner of it. He could not conscientiously attend the meetings which had lately been held, because, instead of sowing dissension between landlord and tenant, the exigencies of the time required that they should be drawn close together in order to fight their common enemy—famine.

MR. MARTEN said, there was one among the number of Irish Members who must be in the mind of Members of the House when they reflected on the Irish Question. He meant the Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell), who, though he could enlighten the House on the subject of Irish distress, was absent, apparently, without any adequate reason. Another face he had expected to see, knowing his interest on the Irish Question, was that of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright). Now they knew that right hon. Gentlemen had made speeches on the Irish Question, and particularly had made an elaborate speech on the question of Irish land tenure, and a proposal for a transference of the rights of landlords to some Commission which should act as gigantic land-jobbers. He confessed he was, therefore, somewhat astonished the House had not had the pleasure of seeing the right hon. Gentleman during the present debate, in order that he might enlighten them on the proposal he had made. Another right hon. Gentleman was absent—namely, the Prime Minister of the previous Administration, and one who was always prominent before the country by his ability and experience. Probably domestic affliction had detained him from the House. If so, he (Mr. Marten) could only regret such a reason for his absence from the House. But if no cause of that kind detained him from the debate, he thought it was to be regretted that the right hon. Gentleman was not present in order that they might hear his views on the subject. They all knew that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham formerly described the Conservative Party as being pre-eminently a stupid Party. Now they saw that accusation wholly changed, and every matter of policy which the Conservative Party adopted was at once held up as astute and Machiavelian. During this debate they saw a remarkable instance of that change of feeling. The Conservative Party had been charged with originating the Home Rule movement. This absurd accusation had been abundantly refuted, and he should not further discuss it; but should proceed to consider the complaint made against the Government in connection with the existing distress. The hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) had accused the Government of having done nothing to prevent deaths which would have occurred but for private charity. It was no part of the duty of Government to supersede private charity; and if that was sufficient to meet the case the Government would not be to blame for not stepping in. Did the hon. Member mean to charge the Government with a wilful neglect of that which they ought to have done? That was a very serious charge, and one which, if made, ought to be sustained by the most cogent evidence. Now, in the case of a sudden emergency arising in particular districts through the failure of the harvest, the Government, guided by the desire, at all events, to avert starvation, might provide adequate supplies of food for that purpose; but, at the same time, they should be on their guard against doing anything which would have the effect of demoralizing the poor, and of permanently producing that state of semi-starvation among them which had first originated in a particular crisis. Having regard to those principles, he maintained that the Government, so far from being open to the charge made against them by the hon. Member for Birmingham, were very early on the alert making inquiries into the condition of the various districts and as to what provision was requisite to save the people from perishing. The Local Government Board issued its first Circular on the 5th of September, requesting the Inspectors to obtain information as to the state of things in the different districts, and that information was communicated to the Irish Government on the 28th of October. The Reports thus furnished to them showed that the failure of the crops was partial, the crops in some places being found to be fair. So far from the distress being universal throughout Ireland, it existed only in certain parts of the country; and the terms of the Amendment itself virtually admitted that it was not universal. On the 14th of November the Irish Government applied to the Treasury, which, on the same day, replied as to the measures of relief to be adopted. The active measures taken might be thought inadequate by some and excessive by others; but a certain discretion must be left to the Government to be exercised to the best of their judgment and ability. Complaint had been made that the Government had kept people in ignorance of what they had done; but if they had made it known before they would have excited hopes throughout Ireland which would have led to exaggerated claims for relief, and perhaps the money given would have gone into the wrong channel or been wasted. The Government ought, above all things, to retain within their own control the means they intended to employ, and only display and make use of those means as the actual exigency might require. The relief measures they had taken had received the approval of the hon. Member for the county of Longford (Mr. Errington) and other hon. Gentlemen qualified to express an opinion, and it was acknowledged that they had been most beneficial. He did not understand why the Government should be found fault with because they were not forward to act outside the law. It was a serious responsibility even for a Government to go beyond the limits which had been fixed by law; and they would been doing wrong if they had taken measures, as had been suggested by hon. Members, at so early a period as August or September. In his opinion, nothing could have been more unwise than for the Government to go into the market and buy up food and fuel. What would have been the effect? The effect would have been to produce a great, immediate rise in prices, which would have redounded more to the advantage of the sellers than to that of any other class. He denied that the Government proposals were inadequate. The fact that not a life had been lost was sufficient proof of that. Moreover, Ireland was not a very large country; every part was accessible from every other part, and if distress prevailed in one district there could be no difficulty in immediately sending supplies from the more favoured parts of the country. It had been put forward as an argument against the proposals of the Government that some capitalist might take advantage of them and buy up thousands of acres at a cheap rate and turn the wilderness or the bog into a fruitful field, and then sell it at a great profit to himself. He did not see the force of that reasoning, as Ireland would largely benefit from the influx of Scotch or English capital, and that was what was really needed in the country. With regard to the rules regulating outdoor relief, he thought the House ought to bear in mind that they were not ancient Conservative laws; they were Whig laws, and they were modern laws which had been considered and re-considered by the Legislature in recent times; and to set them aside without the sanction of the Legislature, except in a case of the most absolute necessity, would be a matter of a very serious character. The Amendment which had been proposed to the Address indicated the variations of opinion which they were from time to time told existed among the Home Rule Party. The Amendment consisted of 13 lines, containing four propositions, each of which seemed to have been contributed by a different section of the Party. The first proposition, from its comparatively moderate tone, appeared to be due to the counsels of the nominal Leader of the Party. But the second proposition imported into the controversy much stronger language, and proceeded, he might suppose, from the advanced wing. With regard to the third proposition contained in it, insisting on the necessity for immediate legislation, he was desirous of pointing out the fact that, though four nights had now been spent in discussion, the Government had had the greatest difficulty in obtaining permission to legislate. The Government Bill had already been opposed, and its progress would probably not be very smooth in the future. The hon. Members who contended that there should be immediate legislation in connection with the question under consideration were the very Gentlemen who were standing in the way of legislation. They were, therefore, acting in a most inconsistent way. The fourth clause of the Amendment had, he confessed, astonished him not a little; for the tenure of land, to which it referred, had now for many years occupied the attention of Parliament. Were they to understand from the Amendment that the Land Act of 1870 was really to blame for the starvation now existing? He could not think that it was the deliberate opinion of the Irish Members that that Act, which when it was passed was supposed to be a great measure, was based upon mistaken notions and productive of distress. The hon. Member for Reading (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) who was the *fidus Achates* of the right hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright) so far as the Land Question was concerned, had come forward in long letters addressed to *The Times* as an interpreter of the oracle, who had proposed measures of a totally impracticable character. Now, what he understood the hon. Member for Reading to advocate was that the tenant, not paying more than the existing rate of rent, should at the end of 35 years become the owner of his holding; but that proposal, if it meant anything, would simply have the effect of making the landlords annuitants at that rate for the period mentioned, which would amount to nothing less than confiscation. An annuity, payable year by year for 35 years, was a very different thing from purchase money paid down at 35 years' purchase. It was also suggested that a body of Government Commissioners should be created, who should go about the country purchasing land, which they were to split up into small holdings. The result would be that the Commissioners would be made a sort of buffer between the landlord and the tenant; that when they came into the market the price of land would be raised; and that the tenant, instead of being able to buy directly, would never be able to do so except through their instrumentality. Besides, the Commissioners being, as it were, an impalpable body, resident nowhere and with no bowels of compassion in the discharge of their duty, the tenant, so far from being benefited by having to deal with them, would, in reality, be deprived of the resource which was now open to him in times of emergency. In making these observations, it must not be supposed that he was not as ready as anyone to facilitate the transfer of land; but that was entirely different from advocating the artificial creation of a large number of peasant proprietors. He might add that the purchase of land was probably the worst investment which a man possessed of only a few hundred pounds could make, inasmuch as he could get a much higher rate of interest for his money by disposing of it in some other way. But be that as it might, the creation of a number of peasant proprietors could not be regarded as a remedy for the existing distress in Ireland; and he therefore hoped that the confused Amendment before the House would be rejected by an overwhelming majority.

Mr. COLLINS said, they were told that the Irish Members who sat in conclave last week might have done this or that; but the responsibility rested on the Government alone of preventing the great calamity which was now coming on the country. The hon. Member for Clitheroe (Mr. Assheton) had asked why Irish tenants had not confidence in their landlords like English tenants? That was begging the whole question. Irish tenants had not confidence in their landlords because they had been treated in many cases with harshness — he should be sorry to use the word injustice. He contended that those who were in favour of relying on the operation of the Poor Law as a remedy for the prevailing distress in Ireland must be ignorant of the way in which it worked in that country, adding that it was highly undesirable to postpone measures of relief until some deaths from absolute starvation had occurred. Without referring to the irritating topics which had been introduced in the course of the debate, he thought he would best discharge his duty as an Irish Representative if he stated his views with reference to the present condition of Ireland. The absorbing question with which they had to deal was how best the existing distress could be relieved—how best a greater calamity still could be avoided. For his part, he believed that the desire of the Irish Members was to unite all parties and all classes in the effort to alleviate the great and widespread distress which afflicted their country. For his part, he acquitted Her Majesty's Government of the accusation of wilful neglect and indifference in the matter of supplying adequate and sufficient remedies to meet the distress. He sincerely believed that the Lord Lieutenant and the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland were fully sensible of the grave responsibility which rested upon them, and were desirous of doing their duty as fully as they were able in order to alleviate distress and prevent famine. While he said that, however, he thought that the Government had laid themselves open to a certain, probably a considerable, amount of blame in not having at the approach of the calamity boldly taken measures to meet the emergency. They had thus assumed to themselves a greater amount of responsibility than they would have incurred had they adopted a vigorous course with a view to the prevention of a great evil. He could not doubt that had they done so and thrown themselves upon the generosity and justice of Parliament, the House would cheerfully have indemnified them from the consequences of acts done in the interest of humanity and good government. He regretted that strong language had been made use of at some assemblies in Ireland by earnest advocates of the cause of Ireland; but they were probably moved by the memories of the great disaster which fell upon their country in 1846. He himself went through the famine-smitten districts of that time, and never till he descended into the grave should he forget the horrors which he had witnessed. The debate which had taken place could not but be productive of good, by the attention it had directed to the condition of Ireland; and he thought his hon. Friend the Member for Cork

(Mr. Shaw) had done good service by calling attention by his Amendment to the question of land tenure in Ireland. The existing distress and the remedies for it were so closely identified and interwoven that it would be impossible to separate the one subject from the other. One very important matter was the want of communication in Ireland; and the hon. Member for Galway (Mr. Mitchell Henry) had given some interesting facts bearing on the relation between value of produce and the means of communication. In the famine time he had himself found that there were districts in which a turbot weighing 12 lbs. could be bought for 10*d.*, a fowl for 3*d.*, a dozen eggs for 1½*d.*, and a cartload of peat for 1*s.* 6*d.* It seemed very strange that in periods of distress there should be such prices. But the explanation was that the people lived entirely on Indian meal—sold everything they had to buy food to keep body and soul together. If there had been railway communication at that time such a state of things could not have existed. He recommended the development of the country by means of railways—not railways costing £7,000 a-mile, which could never pay in a poor country, but railways of 3 feet or 3½ feet gauge costing about £2,500 a-mile. In the poorer districts he would recommend the formation of tramways; and he regretted that two Tramway Bills, which he introduced last Session, were thrown out. Had they not been thrown out they would have taken £500,000 where work was now wanted by the people. He was persuaded that the present system of land tenure in Ireland was chargeable with many, if not with most, of the evils of the country. Security of tenure in some form was necessary to the peace and prosperity of Ireland. He thought the statements made by Members of the Government, which were to the effect that the Government would take adequate steps to cope with the trouble with which Ireland was threatened, would have a good and calming effect on the people of the country. The First Lord of the Admiralty said the other night that Her Majesty's Ministers fully admitted their responsibility, and that it was their duty to prevent a famine. While everyone in Ireland was deeply indebted to the noble lady who had devoted her time and her sympathy to the work of relief, and while they all thanked the Lord Mayor of Dublin for what he had done, it was still the clear and manifest duty of the Government to prevent a great calamity and to employ the revenues of this great country for the purpose of relieving distress. He hoped the Government would administer relief with an unsparing hand.

MR. MUNDELLA thought that hon. Members ought not to address themselves to a subject of this kind unless they had acquired such information as enabled them to understand the whole of the circumstances of the case. He did not know of any Member of the House who would wish to impute to the Government a want of desire to save the Irish people from the horrors of famine. He was sure those sitting on the front Ministerial Bench were guided by humanity, and had no wish that any woman or child in Ireland should be likely to perish from hunger, or from suffering consequent on want. The real danger, he feared, was the difficulty of making the official mind comprehend the danger to which the House was now brought face to face. He had not derived his information on this subject from the newspapers, or from the reports furnished to the House, because if he had he should have felt some reluctance in saying what he was now about to state. As a director of a bank which had its branches throughout the whole of the South and West of Ireland, he had been for several months in receipt of communications from those districts; and he was bound to say that the evidence laid before him satisfied him that the persons employed by the Government had not fully realized the present state of things in Ireland. In September last those who were well acquainted with the state of the country arrived at the conclusion that a famine was in some parts of Ireland inevitable. It was very difficult indeed for persons in that House to realize that such a calamity was hanging over Ireland at that time; but every day since the character of the information furnished from the South and West grew more and more threatening and dark. He had seen letters from men who were not agitators, who were not politicians, but men who were calm men of business, resident in the locality, and dealing only with the people in the capacity of bank managers and responsible men of business. Some of their letters were of a most alarming character. In a letter which he received only yesterday, the writer said—

> "The general distress among the mass of the people anticipated by my letter of the 18th of November last is being now abundantly verified. It is to be hoped the action of the Government will be brought to provide for the distress daily increasing. This year the distress is nearly as bad as in the year 1848."

All those gloomy predictions, which began in September last, had daily been realized. It had been said on the other side of the House that nobody had yet died of starvation, and that there was no proof of such an occurrence. Surely that was no answer to the complaints which had been made to the Government? Death from actual famine was not the worst thing to be dreaded. What had been said by an hon. Member on the Ministerial side of the House last night? Why, that there were thousands of families in the West of Ireland who had to be content with one meal a-day of Indian corn! Who in that House would have the audacity to say there had been no deaths from famine? He (Mr. Mundella) saw abundant evidence of the fact. The people were becoming more and more enfeebled and unfit for work, and obliged to rest the greater part of the day for fear of exciting the pangs of hunger. At night these persons were known to go clamouring round the houses of the priests. He was now speaking of what took place in Connemara and other parts of the West of Ireland. They were there early in the morning, clamouring for a handful of meal to stave off hunger. The people were becoming emaciated, and the vital power becoming lowered. They knew that in 1847 the famine fever was the great cause of the mortality amongst the people of Ireland. The people were dying of actual starvation there again. Among the people there was now the same miserable, low feeling, and condition of vitality which preceded that calamity in 1847. A great deal had been said about the accuracy of the Reports furnished by the Government; but he (Mr. Mundella) had learnt these things from calm men of business. The first thing which the Government Inspector did when he went to these distressed places was to call upon the managers of the local banks; but he was told it was very hard to convince the Inspectors of the real state of the people in the neighbourhood. That was just the very thing that always occurred in the history of those calamities, whether they went back to the Famine of 1847, or to what occurred during the Crimean War. The mischief was always done before the danger was actually gauged. That was what he believed was likely to occur at the present time. The people were in a wretched emaciated condition in large numbers. He read the other day of hundreds of people waiting for meal. They stood waiting for it nearly all the night, and they were there again before daybreak. What could they expect of people in that condition? Would it not be better for the Government to find these poor people employment, or give them some money to earn on works, and not allow them to be demoralized by this system of relief? It was far better that the Government should have recourse to the most lavish and open-handed relief, than that it should be said the English people and Parliament allowed any number, however small, to perish of famine. He thought it was the duty of the House to absolve its conscience of any neglect or trifling with this matter. It would be unworthy of the people of this country that this should happen. It was bad enough to see the begging-box go around the world; but, in Heaven's name, let it not be said that the Government was wanting in courage and promptitude to relieve such distress as that which now existed in Ireland! In Killarney from 3,000 to 4,000 able-bodied persons were in receipt of relief, being entirely unemployed. He was afraid, if he were to suggest remedies, his remedies would hardly be of an orthodox character, or in accordance with the views of political economists. He did not believe that Ireland could be governed in full accord with those economical theories which worked satisfactorily in England. In England everything was left to individual enterprize, for they had capital and a population well-fed; but in Ireland he did not believe they could conduct the government on that principle. He knew he was sinning against what was called "political economy" in what he was about to say; but he would appeal to the House to remember what happened in the British Colonies. If

Ireland was a British Colony, would she be as she was? Take the Australian Colony, for example. There the State made the railways, the piers, and harbours, and took the lead in developing the Colonies. It was said it would not pay to make railways in Ireland. He rejoiced to think that the vote which he gave in that House was to buy up the Irish railways. Some day that would be done. He did not know any more ill-managed railways in the world than the Irish railways. Take the case of Clifden, which was 50 miles from Donegal. What means had the people of that place of taking their fish or agriculture to market? It was 50 miles drive from Galway, with hardly any means of conveyance; and when you went to Galway, it took as long to go from Galway to Dublin as from London to Edinburgh. Ireland wanted better and cheaper means of transport. In that very large district there were thousands of men on the very verge of starvation. In a few more weeks they would be too much enfeebled to perform manual labour. To make a cheap railway from Clifton to Galway was far better than pauperizing the people, for it would be of practical service to the country. It was not thought so strange for New Zealand to make her own railways, nor the whole of the Australian Colonies to make their railways, and develop the back part of the Colony. He did not think there was anything more wanted for Ireland than that these places should be provided with facilities such as he had described, for the purpose of removing her produce to the markets. In the West of Ireland the people were shut in, and had no idea of moving, and what he wanted was to open up the country. If the money wasted during the last four or five years in wars in South Africa and Afghanistan had been spent on Ireland, that country would be much more prosperous to-day, and the House would not at that moment be dwelling on the painful condition of her people. He thought, from the evidence which had been adduced, that the Government had not made ample and adequate provision for the dangers which were before them. From the evidence before him (Mr. Mundella), there were thousands, and perhaps tens of thousands, of our Irish fellow-subjects who were enduring the pangs of slow starvation. That must have its result in disease and death. In a few weeks or months hence they would be face to face with a terrible calamity, for which no adequate provision had been made. Admitting that the Amendment was not perfect, he must say it was moderate. It said that—

> "Her Majesty's Government, although in possession of timely warning and information, have not taken adequate steps to meet promptly and efficaciously the severe distress now existing and increasing in Ireland."

He believed they had not. He could not find a single county in Ireland in which any number of men had been employed either in public works or through the grants to the landlords, or that the Boards of Guardians had acted in a spirited manner. Why, the Boards of Guardians were themselves in a very bad condition, and hardly likely to load themselves with liabilities which they could hardly possibly meet. The occupier was, in many instances, on the verge of the workhouse. He had heard of an Irish landlord giving out doles, in order that the tenant might not abandon his little plot and go into the workhouse. Where that was the case it could hardly be expected that the Guardians would undertake heavier rates. He hoped the Government would therefore act promptly and with generosity. He was quite sure the House would not be slow in voting the Government what was required to meet the exigencies of the case. The hon. and gallant Baronet (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) had said that he saw many public works in 1847; that there were idle fellows upon them who were clamorous when they were not paid. But what happened in Lancashire? In the Report of Mr. Rawlinson, it was stated that when once the Lancashire weavers were set to work by proper engineers their willingness was marvellous. When the men were treated like men, and not like paupers, they acted like men. Were not Irishmen always found doing the hard and rough work of England and every country to which they went; and would they not do the same in their own country if only the thing were properly managed and arranged? It was humiliating, after the long connection between the two countries, to find Ireland in the miserable condition she was in to-day. That was no new thing; it was only an episode in the history of Ireland; and if it was to be brought to an end we must deal with Ireland in a different manner from what we had done hitherto. The Amendment proposed that something should be done with regard to the land. Hon. Gentlemen opposite declaimed against persons who proposed any change in the tenure of land in Ireland. No one who knew anything of the financial condition of Ireland, especially of the farmers of that country to-day and 10 years ago, could deny that the Land Act of the right hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr. Gladstone) had done great things for the people of Ireland. He could say that from his own experience. But much still remained to be done. Fixity of tenure was spoken of by the hon. and learned Member for Cambridge (Mr. Marten) as confiscation. Well, he (Mr. Mundella) had the authority of a noble Lord (Lord Monck) who was a Member of the Upper House and a distinguished servant of the Crown, being the Chairman of the Church Commissioners, and who was, moreover, an Irish landlord, to state, with reference to the work of the Church Commissioners, that the arrests were a mere bagatelle, and that the tenants denied themselves in order to meet their liability. Lord Monck further said that for 12 years past he had been an advocate of fixity of tenure, which he believed was the only real settlement of the Land Question. Now, Lord Monck was not a revolutionist or an agitator, and there was no man who had a better knowledge of what he talked about. England had not done its duty to Ireland. There must be a new state of things in our dealing with public works, the Land Question, political equality, and with self-government. He would, therefore, vote for the Amendment.

Mr. RYLANDS said, it would be an unfortunate impression to go abroad that there had not been much interest shown by English Members in the views and objects of Members for Ireland; and admitting that Irish Members were entitled to the first place in the debate, and having listened to them with great attention, he should be sorry if it were supposed that in a matter concerning an important part of the British Empire English Members were not prepared to take their part. He fully concurred with the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), who was the first English Member to speak in favour of the Amendment, except on one point. The hon. Gentleman had said he had never voted for the Committee of Inquiry into Home Rule, and he did not intend to do so; but he (Mr. Rylands) differed from his hon. Friend here, and should vote for a Committee of Inquiry. He had done this conscientiously; he repudiated the statement that certain English Members intended to vote for the inquiry in order to throw dust in the eyes of the supporters of Home Rule. He should vote for the Committee in the hope that the House might thus ascertain what was really proposed for the better government of Ireland; and if it could be shown that there were means of leading to such a result, he, for one, would cheerfully accept the conclusions of the Committee. He was aware of the imputations to which he might expose himself by these remarks. They had been told on high authority that to be in favour of Home Rule was to be disloyal to the Throne. He was not sure whether to vote for a Committee of Inquiry would equally be an act of disloyalty. Lord Ramsay was charged with having trafficked with the Home Rule vote. He (Mr. Rylands) had the honour of a conversation with Lord Ramsay before any communication was made to him by the Home Rulers, and Lord Ramsay entirely agreed with him that any proposal of the Irish people for inquiry, with a view to secure better government for their country, ought to be granted. It was usual, when a section of the House demanded a Committee of Inquiry, to grant it as a matter of courtesy; the demands, therefore, of the great body of the Irish people certainly deserved to be treated with respect. Surely they were not to be stigmatized contemptuously as Home Rulers, even though the Prime Minister, who since the days of Tadpole and Taper had been the great manufacturer of Party cries, and who, a generation ago, suggested the cry of "Our young Queen and our old Constitution," now raised the cry of the "integrity of the British Empire." Were they to be told that, in supporting inquiry, they were in favour of the disintegration of the Empire and false to the Queen? [Admiral Sir William Edmonstone: Hear, hear!] The hon. and gallant Admiral cheered that statement; and it was necessary to remind him that, at the present moment, there was Home Rule in Canada. Was Canada within the British Empire? In the Australian Colonies also there was Home Rule. But perhaps the hon. and gallant Admiral thought those cases were different, because they were so far off, or because they were Colonies. Well, there was Home Rule in the Isle of Man. Was it disintegration of the British Empire to have a certain amount of Home Rule in the Isle of Man? There were Manx patriots who managed their own affairs and passed laws on their own Tynwald, and who would resent any attempt to deprive them of their privileges. The fact was that all the talk about disintegration was a mere hypocritical pretext, intended to disguise the real objection to Home Rule, which was, not that it would lead to the disintegration of the Empire—for nobody proposed that—but because it would give the Irish people some control over their own affairs. He did not understand the Home Rule Party to desire the disintegration of the Empire. The fact was that the Government remembered that in Ireland there were bitter memories of confiscation, oppression, and injustice, and knowing that there was still much of which the Irish people might complain, they objected to giving them greater control over their own affairs; but why did they not say so? To say that the Home Rulers contemplated the disintegration of the Empire was to use a misleading expression, and one not justified by the facts of the case. He did not wish to see an extreme measure of Home Rule, but desired merely to see what its advocates would allege before a Committee of the House. Now, with reference to the debate, he would remark that those English Members who had not opposed the conduct of the Government had damned it with very faint praise indeed; while the right hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster), in justifying the Ministerial policy, had had to rely on impressions that had proved absolutely false, and of which most had proceeded from the presumption that the Government had done right. Even when the contrary was shown to be the case, the right hon. Gentleman's magnanimity had still made him inclined to support them. For himself, his (Mr. Rylands') experience of the Government generally produced a presumption that they were wrong; and certainly, in the present case, he did not hesitate to support the Amendment, because in its own words—

> "Although they were in possession of timely warning, they had not taken adequate steps to meet promptly and efficaciously the severe distress now existing and increasing in Ireland."

He would tell them why he believed this charge true. Last May, on the Motion for adjournment over Whitsuntide, the hon. Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell) moved to limit the period of adjournment to allow the House the opportunity of considering the subject of agricultural distress. The hon. Member for Longford (Mr. Justin M'Carthy) seconded the Amendment, and, in doing so, said—

> "He was perfectly certain that the distress in Ireland had become so great as to render an attempt by Parliament to deal with the question imperative and unavoidable. They heard from farmers, priests, and peasants alike, that the crisis was imminent, urgent, and even perilous."

And he appealed to the Government to—

> "Give some assurance to the Irish peasantry which might send them a gleam of hope."—[3 *Hansard*, ccxlvi. 1392-3.]

When the attention of the Government was thus called to the approaching distress, the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, so far from giving the Irish peasantry a gleam of hope, treated the matter with indifference, stating that he was glad to think the depression was neither so prevalent nor acute as the depression in other parts of the Kingdom. But even supposing that there were districts in England in which the distress was as great as in Ireland, the right hon. Gentleman must know that the means of meeting it were very different; and that in Ireland agricultural depression brought with it evils which were not likely to affect any other part of the Kingdom. But what had occurred since had proved that the right hon. Gentleman was entirely wrong; and yet so recently as June last, when his attention was directed to the representations as to the prevalence of agricultural distress made by Boards of Guardians and by Roman Catholic Bishops and clergy, he treated the matter not only with levity, but with what he might almost call insolence.

["Oh, oh!"] He did not wish to say a word that was personally offensive to the right hon. Gentleman; but his answers on the question had been of a character which naturally excited a good deal of irritation. It seemed as if the Government were not only indisposed to listen to the representation of Irish Members, but were determined to put them aside with language which was certainly calculated to annoy. From the circumstances, he had come to the conclusion that the Government had information which might reasonably have led them to take measures to prepare for the extreme distress and danger which now existed. He was not prepared to oppose any suggestion which the Government might make for the removal of Irish distress; but he was bound to say that the proposal to grant money to landowners for effecting improvements on their estates was open to very serious objections. The relief measures of the Government were correctly described by *The Times* in the words "the Irish Church Fund pays for all;" and the same article also said that—

> "Mr. Disraeli opposed the Irish Church Bill, on the ground that the spoliation of churches had always ended in the enrichment of landlords."

It seemed that even yet the Irish landlords might have a further portion of the spoil. If the landlords were merely unwilling to make improvements they ought to be compelled to do so; for, in his opinion, property ought to bear the charges necessary to prevent distress in the country. If, however, the landowners were unable to make improvements, this was very strong evidence that they could not fulfil the trust on which alone landed property should be held in such large quantities. A very high authority, Judge Longfield, had laid down the dictum that landed property was unlike other property, because it was held as a trust, and that the tenure of land should be modified from time to time in accordance with the general interests of the community. Therefore he thought they had a right to deal boldly and freely with the question by Act of Parliament. He hoped the Government would adopt some means to prevent the recurrence of these desolating famines in Ireland. It was of the greatest importance that some of the suggestions of the right hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) should be carried out, that peasant proprietors should be called into existence, and that concurrently with that some means should be devised by which the occupier might be preserved from the unjust exactions of the owner, and should be inspired with such confidence in his position as would induce him to make the best efforts for the improvement of the soil. The hon. Member for Belfast (Mr. J. P. Corry), in seconding the Address in reply to the Speech, referred to emigration as the great panacea for the removal of all the evils of Ireland; but his (Mr. Rylands') belief was that Ireland, with proper cultivation and more equal distribution, would support a much larger population than she had at present. In proof of that, he need only refer to the case of the Channel Islands, where there was a greater distribution of landed proprietors, a very much larger number of families in proportion to the acreage was supported by agriculture. If the occupiers of the soil in Ireland had confidence that the fruits of their labour and industry would not be taken from them in increased rents, the land would be better cultivated and the people would be much more prosperous. If they wanted to get rid of the demand for Home Rule, they must govern Ireland in the interests of the Irish people; they must seek by just laws to develop the industry of the country, and to make it a happy and prosperous portion of the British Dominions.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY wished to remind the House that the Irish Government, in communicating with the Treasury on the 14th November, had laid down a very important proposition, which they had since been obliged to abandon—namely, that the gratuitous distribution of the necessaries of life would be productive of very serious evils. They had since then been compelled to suggest to Her Majesty's Government that there should actually be a gratuitous distribution of necessaries. The first position taken up was that employment might be given through the landowners; and in the advice the Treasury had given to the Irish Government on, he believed, the same date, there was evidence that they foresaw the gravity of the occasion. One, however, of the three Inspectors selected by the Irish Government, at a salary of £500 a-year, was a young gentleman who had no experience; he was appointed in the county of Mayo, where the greatest distress prevailed, and this fact was regarded in Ireland as quite unworthy of a wise Government. It was evident that the latter had miscalculated the resources upon which they could rely for the sustenance of the people. The proposal now was that out-door relief should be given; but he contended such a course would not have been necessary if the Government had carefully deliberated on some plan of public works. The necessity of out-door relief to the large extent which was now imperative was altogether the result of the miscalculations of the Government, and the question now was—Who was to bear the burden of the out-door relief, and how was it to be procured? It had been suggested that it should be given by the Boards of Guardians. But should they give it? Was there the means of giving it within their reach? The landlords were admittedly impoverished, and so were the tenants; and the result of out-door relief being largely given from the rates would result in the generation of a new kind of pauper and a fresh kind of distress. If the Government did not want to render the famine permanent, but to reduce it to a temporary duration, the relief must be provided from some other than those rates. Considering that it was owing to the mistake of the Government that the present dilemma arose, he thought it was not at all unfair or unconscionable that the Imperial Treasury should be called upon to bear the burden of the proposed out-door relief. The people of Ireland were quite ready to bear their average, and more than their average, Poor Law expenditure; but they were not willing to bear the burden of a large out-door relief, which had become necessary by the miscalculation of the Government. He was quite sure that the opinion of the people of England would join with them in calling upon the Government to pursue a course of such obvious policy. If, however, the rates were to be burdened with any portion of the out-door relief which was occasioned by the famine, he had a word to say as to the manner in which the rates were to be levied. It would be unfair, he contended, to charge them upon the electoral districts, and it would be equally unjust to charge them upon the Unions, because it was well known that the famine was confined to isolated places. If they threw on the rate a uniform charge on out-door relief they did a great deal of harm. The view he took of the distress was that it was a national calamity affecting all districts in Ireland, and whatever charges arose in consequence they ought to be raised by a national rate. The matter of the out-door relief being owing to the Government, it ought to be borne by an Imperial Parliament. He did not think it was at all necessary for the Seconder of the Address (Mr. J. P. Corry) to have introduced into his speech the subject of Home Rule, and it might very well have been omitted. He said that the greater part of the Irish Members thought it meant the repeal of the Union; but this was not the case. It was also said that they were seeking the disseverance of the Empire; but they were doing nothing of the kind. They only wanted to control their own affairs. As for the charge of being false to their Sovereign and country, it was not the Home Rulers, but the Government, who would be false to the highest interests of the country if, in a district within 24 hours' journey of the Metropolis, the present distress was allowed to ripen into famine.

MR. JACOB BRIGHT admitted that the debate had been a long one, and he believed there was a general desire that it should come to a conclusion that night. ["Hear, hear!"] That being so, he would occupy only a very few minutes of the attention of the House. He had listened very carefully to the greater part of the debate, in the earnest desire to learn what the real condition of Ireland was, and in order that he might judge whether the efforts of the Government were commensurate with the circumstances. Well, he had been forced to come to the conclusion that the state of Ireland was serious, and also that the efforts of the Government had not met the difficulties by which they were faced. He was not going to make many quotations. It was too late to do that; but he would refer for a moment to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Member for Tipperary (Mr. Gray), because if any Member of the Government intended to reply to anything that had been advanced, he wished he would give some answer to the statements to which he referred. The right hon. the Lord Mayor of Dublin said that his Committee had given him abundant testimony from persons representing all religious and political creeds that there was not only danger of the people dying from starvation, but that they were so dying; that they were living on one meal of Indian corn a-day, and that they could no longer get credit for that. If that statement were true, it seemed to him (Mr. Jacob Bright) that that alone would compel them to say that the Government had been unfortunate and had not met the difficulties of the case. They who sat there might think it a slight thing to have one meal a-day, and that of Indian corn; but their common sense would tell them what the result would be. If they wanted any scientific information on the subject the hon. Member for Galway (Mr. Mitchell Henry) was competent to give it; in fact, he gave it in his speech last night. He said that such diet would lead to disease, to fever, probably to pestilence, it might be slow death. If the Members of that House were for the next few weeks or months fed on that diet; if they had only one unvarying meal of Indian corn per day, he (Mr. Jacob Bright) ventured to say that the attendance of the House would gradually grow thinner, and in a little time the right hon. Gentleman in the Chair would disappear, because there would be no one over whom to preside. He supposed the statement of the right hon. the Lord Mayor of Dublin, to which he had referred, was true; he supposed that to-day and to-morrow a large number of people would be trying to live on this meal of Indian corn. If that were the case, was he not justified in voting for the Amendment which said that the efforts of the Government had been inadequate to the case? The hon. and gallant Member for West Sussex (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) had deprecated any attempt to speak on the Land Question—or, in other words, to discuss the causes of the catastrophe. He undertook to say that there was no country in Europe having anything like the climate of Ireland that could avoid famine, if it had the same Land Laws. Suggestions had been made to the Government by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Reading (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) and others with respect to changes in the Land Laws. So far, however, as he understood the position of the Government, it was that they looked with disdain on every one of those suggestions, and refused to have anything to do with them. Still, he believed that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and every capable man on the Government Benches would admit that those laws could not remain as they were. But it might be urged that the Government had announced its intention of reforming the Land Laws. Yes, from the reference made to the subject in Her Majesty's Speech, he gathered that they intended to tinker that great question, as they had done that of the English tenant right by the inoperative Agricultural Holdings Bill. That would not meet the exigencies of the case. If the Government rejected plans proposed by the Opposition, it should certainly have some scheme of its own, and one equal to the occasion. A good deal had been said about Home Rule. It seemed that a Home Ruler in Ireland was a very objectionable person, but that a Home Ruler in England was guilty almost of a crime. He had thought that it was our boast in this country that discussion and opinion were free; that we were entitled to criticize any one of our institutions, and to condemn it, or approve, according to the reason of the case. He did not, therefore, understand why men were to be ostracized because they came to the conclusion that some of our institutions were not good, or were capable of amendment. He believed that if England was in the same position as Ireland; if she were governed by a powerful overshadowing neighbour; if she were a purely agricultural country, with a great land monopoly; if the owners of the land were many of them absentees, doing nothing for the land; if the cultivators of the soil were tenants-at-will, with no security that the results of their toil would be their own, and with no possibility of leading independent lives; if these were the circumstances in which we were placed, he believed Englishmen and Scotchmen would be Home Rulers, and would not rest until they had obtained their own Parliament, or secured such a measure of justice as would satisfy the people. It had been said that to vote for an inquiry into the grounds of the demand for Home Rule was a perilous thing, because it would inspire false hopes in the Irish people. He did not see the force of that objection. The

Irish were not children. They had a free Press; they had a most active body of Representatives; for nearly half-a-century they had had a National School system. The country could not be so ignorant as this objection implied. He had voted for the Committee of Inquiry, and should vote for it again. There were 5,000 men in Manchester of Irish nationality who had an earnest desire for this inquiry; and if any other 5,000 men had a strong and abiding desire for inquiry into some important subject he would vote as they wished. He was not anxious for the inquiry; but he believed it would do more good than harm—it would help to convince the Irish people of the impractibility, if not of the impossibility, of restoring the Irish Parliament. It would do a great deal to convince England and the Party opposite, which was always so slow to learn, that before they could stifle the cry for Home Rule they would have to give a fuller measure of justice than they were yet prepared to grant. He must say, in conclusion, that he wished the Government would act with liberality and decision in the relief of Irish distress. It would not look well if it came to be known in foreign countries that the Irish people were allowed by England to live upon famine wages. He was quite aware that there was no hope of the present Government legislating with a view to remove the causes of Irish distress; and, therefore, he trusted they would soon give place to another Government who would undertake the radical reform of the Irish Land Laws.

MR. FINIGAN said, that in November last he waited upon the Chief Secretary for Ireland with regard to certain public works required in the county of Clare, and he also waited upon the Secretary to the Treasury with regard to Clare Castle Harbour. That harbour had been allowed by the Government to get out of repair, and when the Irish Famine arose the Irish Board of Works was appealed to. In November last the Government promised £2,000 at 5 per cent; but up to this time the Government had not expended one penny. That was but one specimen of the manner in which the Government treated these matters. He had little faith in either Liberals or Conservatives; but he could say that until Irish affairs were talked of with some regard to justice, the House was wasting its time in trying to govern Ireland. It could misrule Ireland as it always had done. The Government had no honest aim or intention of relieving the people of Ireland. Mention had been made of Home Rulers. Well, he did not regret the result of the Liverpool election; but there were 50 constituencies in England where the Home Rulers would do as they had done at Liverpool. Irishmen were determined to agitate this question until justice was done to Ireland.

MR. ASSHETON CROSS: My first word is an expression of the deepest sympathy on behalf of the Irish people suffering from this distress. In speaking this way for myself, I but echo the feeling of every individual Member of the Cabinet. I can assure hon. Members that there is no subject which has received a more tender consideration from us than this evil which afflicts so many parts of Ireland. Having said so much, I think I am justified in claiming some sympathy—after all the speeches which have been made—on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, because if we had never thought of the subject at all, if the matter had come upon us absolutely by surprise, if we had taken no steps to avoid the calamity, then the strong words which have been used — and stronger language could not have been made use of than has been used—would not have been made use of in vain. I think the passage in Her Majesty's gracious Speech relating to Ireland adequately describes the situation; but of the Amendment that has been moved I make no complaint. I would recall to the memory of the House the most able and temperate speech in which the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) supported the Amendment. On a question of this kind I feel it natural that Irish Members coming from their constituencies, deeply feeling the distress existing in a considerable part of Ireland, wish to inform the House of Commons on their first appearance here of what they know is happening in that country, and to present a picture of the condition of the people there. The hon. Member for Cork began by saying that the last harvest was exceptionally bad, the crops did not ripen, and fuel as well as food failed, entailing serious distress in many parts of the country on the small farmers, and considerable distress on large farmers. That is true, to a certain extent. He said that the Memorials which he mentioned as having been presented at different times asked that relief should not be given in alms, that nothing should be done to pauperize the people, but that money should be given in some way for useful relief works, and that the Guardians should have power to grant out-door relief. Therefore, taking the statement of the hon. Member for Cork with the facts brought forward by him, I can find no cause of complaint regarding it, or as to the remedies he has suggested. Further, he has stated, in almost as accurate language as I could state myself, the conclusion Her Majesty's Government came to on the information presented to them, and pointed out the remedies we had thought proper to take, and which, practically, have been taken. The hon. Member, together with other hon. Members, alluded to the Papers laid before the House. One hon. Member argued as if the Papers before the House were the only communications which had passed between the Irish and English Governments; and that because a letter had been written from the Irish Office to the Treasury on a Sunday, either the letter was not considered by the Treasury at all, or that there had been such haste that they had not had time to consider the question. The real fact was that from the time the matter was first brought under the notice of the Government here by the Lord Lieutenant up to the present it had never ceased to engage the attention of the Government, and the letters which had been read were the result of communications that had been constantly made by the authorities in Ireland to the authorities at home, and simply stated the conclusion to which they practically led. Hon. Members, again, seemed to have jumped at the conclusion that measures which it had been thought necessary to take now were the same measures which ought to have been taken three or four months ago. I beg leave to dispute that absolutely, and I beg to say that although it may be quite true that certain measures are necessary now, and that measures ought to and will be taken by the Government, if we had taken those measures in October or November we should have done infinite harm to the people of Ireland—["No, no!"]—we should have done infinite harm to the people of Ireland, we should have caused great disturbance, and we should have done an injury not only to Ireland, but to the country at large. But do not think it is not in our contemplation to take those measures now. What happened was this—that the moment the Lord Lieutenant laid his information before us, from time to time we discussed the whole question well, and we came to the conclusion as to what steps ought to be taken according to the circumstances as they arose; and the steps we have taken lately and are now prepared to take, and shall be prepared to take in the future, are not steps which we have come to the conclusion to adopt now for the first time, but they are the result of long and continued deliberation some time back, only that we determined to take them when we thought the occasion called upon us to do so, and we considered that we should not do so before. That is the very truth of the case, and I venture to say that if we had taken those steps before we should not have been worthy of the trust placed in us. I think if we had adopted the suggestion of some hon. Members, that we should have come forward with large-heartedness, and distributed relief, either in kind or in money, at that time we should have done great evil to the Irish people. What we did was this. We thought, and I believe rightly, that on the first approach of the signs of distress in a case of this kind, the proper course to adopt, the first step to take, before the distress became general, was undoubtedly to fall back upon the institution which, after the experience of the Famine of 1846-7, was re-modelled—I mean the Irish Poor Law Board—and to call the attention of all those who were locally engaged in the administration of the Irish Poor Law to the state of the case, and instruct them to do their duty in preparing for the emergency. Primarily, undoubtedly, the Guardians were responsible for the administration of relief; but if we had not done that which I have stated, and had taken what are called "large-hearted measures" at that time, I believe we should have pursued a wrong course. Our first duty was to warn the Guardians of the distress which was likely to arise during the coming winter, and to warn them of the information which we had received as to the deficiency in the crops, and we should have been proceeding on wrong lines if we had not done so. One hon. Member stated that the only relief we held out was that the workhouses were to be whitewashed and furnished. I may say that, unless we had pointed out to the Guardians that for a long time the workhouses had not been put in order, we should have been guilty of a dereliction of duty. We had been made to ascertain what had happened; and having got that information, the first step we were bound to take was to see that the machinery which the law had provided to meet such an emergency should be put into complete order for operation. Now, the right hon. and learned Gentleman who has spoken in the course of this evening, and who has occupied the responsible position of Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Law) spoke of the Irish Poor Law as "a brutal law." I will not say I think it deserving of that epithet, neither am I going to say that that law does not deserve amendment; but I must remind the right hon. and learned Gentleman that it was passed after due consideration immediately after the Famine of 1846-7, and remodelled. I think it was in 1863—and I must remind the right hon. and learned Gentleman that that measure was not passed by us, but by the Liberal Government of that day. As to the question of out-door relief, I am bound to say that, from the best advice I have received, he is mistaken in the notion that out-door relief cannot be granted to a person in possession of a quarter of an acre of land. He can, I believe, in the first place, receive that relief instead of going to the workhouse; and it is quite certain that, whether he can receive it or not, it can be administered to his wife and children. I speak with great deference to a person of the high authority of the late Attorney General for Ireland; but I believe I am correct. Well, a Circular was issued to the Boards of Guardians, to the effect which I have stated. But we did not let matters rest there. We thought that, considering the scattered nature of the population of Ireland, the Guardians should be warned that it might be necessary to have a much larger staff to take the relief that was given from door to door. We therefore called upon them to add considerably to their staffs, so that there should be no doubt that when the relief was given there should be people to carry it, and find out who it was that required relief. We also took care that the staff of Inspectors of the Local Government Board should be considerably increased, for the purpose of getting information as early as possible as to any change that might take place. Therefore, I think Her Majesty's Government did not neglect anything that they ought to have done to secure that the machinery should, in the inception of the distress, be made available for immediate use, and as efficient as the foresight of the Government could secure. It is said—"But you ought to have done more than that. You should have gone further, and taken other steps." I may state that our information was not that there was a certainty of failure in the crops, but that they would be reduced to about a quarter of a crop, and, in some cases, even less than a quarter of the average; but it came to this—that the crop would last for a certain number of months, and probably up to a certain time, and that it was not before that particular time that the people would be likely to feel the pinch and pressure which no doubt would come. I think it must be quite clear that, although, as I have said, it is perfectly true we had come to a conclusion as to the steps which ought to be taken when that pinch and pressure came, it would have been very wrong if we had made more provision to meet it at an earlier time, because then we should have been doing harm instead of good. Then as to the deficiencies of the Poor Law, no doubt there were two points on which it was thought that it would be insufficient. One was that the Guardians could not give out-door relief to able-bodied paupers so long as the workhouses were not full, and the next point referred to those people who were holders of a quarter of an acre of land. But we strongly recommended at the end of October or the beginning of November that there should be a relaxation of the rule in those cases; and we gave permission to the Local Government Board in Ireland that whenever they thought it necessary to relax the provisions of the law they had ample power to do so, in order to prevent the smallest risk of famine arising. The result was that the Local Government Board, although they issued no Circular on the subject, constantly had Reports from their Inspectors; and they were prepared, at any moment, if it had been proved to them that there was a necessity, to relax the Poor Law in either of those cases. They were prepared at that time—I think it was about November 14—at any moment to relax the ordinary rules. That is the one point to which the hon. Member for Cork has referred, and which we were bound to give our attention to, and I say that that was the first thing to which we did give our attention. It would have been wrong to send that Circular to the Boards of Guardians before the necessity arose. As it is, some of the Boards of Guardians, I am sorry to say, in cases where there could be no reason for anything of the kind, did make application to give out-door relief; so it is quite clear that if the power had been given to all the Boards of Guardians at once, numberless applications would have been made. It was, therefore, thought best to leave it to the discretion of the Local Government Board to act as they might think fit. Can it be thought that the Local Government Board or the Lord Lieutenant would have hesitated for one single moment in case of necessity to act upon the permission given them? I hold, therefore, that although it was right at the time to grant the relaxation, there was nothing to justify its being granted broadcast. It was only wise at the time that precautions should be taken with respect to the relaxation of the Poor Law provisions, because then the crops had not been used up; whereas, had these precautions not been taken, the people would have been induced to eat up their seed potatoes, and the distress would have been hurried on. Now, however, the time has arrived when it should be made generally known to the Guardians that it is the wish of the Government that they should have certain powers of affording out-door relief to able-bodied persons holding a quarter of an acre of land. Do not, therefore, accuse the Government of negligence in this case, because they not only thought it right to give the Local Government Board those powers, but took upon them that responsibility, knowing it to be against the law, and that they would have to come to the House for a Bill of Indemnity. I do not know what other steps the Government could have taken, and I am convinced that the steps they have taken are wise, and at the present moment are producing good fruit. In connection with the rule that out-door relief must be withheld from the able-bodied poor unless when the workhouses are full, I wish to repeat a fact which has already been mentioned — namely, that not a single workhouse, as far as I am informed, has yet been full in any part of Ireland. I admit as freely as anyone that the Irish people dislike going into the workhouse; it is a most honourable feeling, one that is shared by the people of England, and I am glad that the Guardians have now the power of granting out-door relief without imposing upon them that necessity. Another point now arises. Anyone who considers the question, as the Government had to do when it came before them, will see that the Guardians would be unwilling to overburden the rates more than could be avoided—and the more distressed a district might be the more necessary it would be not to do so. Well, to meet that difficulty we acted against the law, and early in January gave authority to the Local Government Board to make loans of money for certain purposes on easier terms than usual in order to find employment for the people and afford them an opportunity of earning money for their support. Further than that, when the time of pressure became greater, and the rate at which the money was offered was not such as to induce either the local landlords or the authorities to borrow money, the Government again, without going to Parliament, authorized the Local Government Board to entertain applications, not at the old, but at much lower rates. Well, a great deal has been said to the effect that the Government ought to have set up large public works, such as railways aud harbours, in the first instance. From that opinion I entirely differ, and I hold that everyone who reads the accounts of the Famine in 1846 and 1847 will come to the same conclusion. I hold that it is far better to find employment in natural channels, far better that the landlords in the distressed districts should find work for persons living on the spot. In consequence of the great facilities placed in the way of landlords and local authorities, a sum approaching £500,000 has already been applied for, and the works undertaken with this money will go on. A gentleman who knows, perhaps, more of the agricultural districts of Ireland than anyone else, has told me that the amount of drainage and improvement that is going on this year owing to the facilities that have been given will be greater than for many years past. No one can foresee all the benefits that will accrue to the labourers and the land. The hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), who has spoken in the course of the debate, has thought proper to stigmatize the mode of giving relief which has been adopted; but the Government have deemed it to be the best course to take to relieve the poor in the districts in which they live. If a large sum of money were given for the construction of great public works, such as railways, piers, and harbours, labour for the purpose would undoubtedly be procured; but labourers from England and Scotland might be employed, and in that way the Government would not be assisting on the spot those whom they sought to aid. And when the Government are charged with neglect in dealing with the distress in Ireland, I must tell the House that which is the real truth—that the subject has been under their consideration for a long time. They have before them, for instance, the question of giving seed. I had a long conversation with the Vice President of the Local Government Board only this very day, and the question was under our notice, even as to what could be done with regard to supplying seed next year. But if in the month of September the Government had said that they were prepared to give seed next year, the result might have been that the stock of potatoes would have been much more rapidly consumed, and that would have produced harm instead of good; whereas, by keeping back the question, the Government are in a position to determine when it is necessary that seed should be found. I am, I think, therefore, justified in saying that the matter has not been overlooked, while I am perfectly willing to accept the second reading of the Bill which has been brought in by the hon. and gallant Member for Galway (Major Nolan). As to out-door relief, it is well that it should be borne in mind that the Guardians themselves are in a very poor condition, and power is given to borrow money for that purpose, as well as for public works.

MAJOR O'GORMAN asked whether the money would be advanced on the security of the Consolidated Fund?

MR. ASSHETON CROSS: The hon. and gallant Member must not ask for details at present. The House will accept the principle as showing the sympathy of the Government, and that we are determined to afford what relief we can to the distressed. The hon. Member for Sheffield (Mr. Mundella) has made some extraordinary observations, and has quoted the expressions of a noble Lord, whom everyone holds in the highest respect, with regard to railways. I should like to know how the provisions he recommends would work, for it would be a good thing if there were these branch railways constructed to bring produce to the market. I would be very glad to see them constructed—by other means, however, than those suggested by the hon. Member for Sheffield. So far as the action of the Government goes, I may mention that I have before me a letter from Lord Monck, in which he says that what he objects to is the proposal for the construction of public works out of funds to be provided for by baronial sessions.

MR. MUNDELLA said, he had only quoted Lord Monck as being in favour of fixity of tenure.

MR. ASSHETON CROSS: I am aware of that; but all I mean to suggest is, that against the one opinion I am entitled to put the other. Now, I do not think it would be desirable to continue the debate. I believe it is the wish of every person in the House that it should be closed. I believe I have shown to the House, the Irish Members, the country, and especially the people of Ireland, that Her Majesty's Government have not been indifferent to the condition of that country. I quite concur that any Executive Government must, in such circumstances as the present, have a very difficult task to discharge. Their hearts may lead them one way; their duty might say that they should take another direction. The wish and the intention of Her Majesty's Government throughout has been to relieve the existing distress. We believe we have taken the wisest course to effect that object, but we have taken it as the occasion arose; and I hope that the House will not think that, because legislative action has not been resorted to until now, Her Majesty's Government have not long since determined upon the course they should recommend to Parliament with a view to meet the present emergency. From the first the Government were determined that, in these unfortunate circumstances, no calamity should fall upon the people of Ireland.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 66; Noes 216: Majority 150.

AYES.

Allen, W. S.
Bell, I. L.
Biggar, J. G.
Blake, T.
Blennerhassett, R. P.
Brady, J.
Briggs, W. E.
Bright, Jacob
Brooks, M.
Browne, G. E.
Cameron, C.
Chamberlain, J.
Collins, E.
Colthurst, Colonel
Cowen, J.
Dickson, T. A.
Digby, K. T.
Dilke, Sir C. W.
Earp, T.
Errington, G.
Fay, C. J.
Finigan, J. L.
Forster, Sir C.
Gabbett, D. F.
Gourley, E. T.
Havelock, Sir H.
Henry, M.
James, W. H.
Jenkins, E.
Lawson, Sir W.
Lea, T.
MacCarthy, J. G.
M‘Carthy, J.
Macdonald, A.
M‘Kenna, Sir J. N.
Martin, P.
Meldon, C. H.
Milbank, F. A.
Morley, S.
Mundella, A. J.
Murphy, N. D.
O'Beirne, Major F.
O'Brien, Sir P.
O'Clery, K.
O'Conor, D. M.
O'Donnell, F. H.
O'Donoghue, The
O'Gorman, P.
O'Gorman Mahon, Col. The
O'Shaughnessy, R.
O'Sullivan, W. H.
Potter, T. B.
Power, J. O'C.
Redmond, W. A.
Rylands, P.
Shaw, W.
Sheil, E.
Sheridan, H. B.
Smith, E.
Smyth, P. J.
Sullivan, A. M.
Swanston, A.
Synan, E. J.
Ward, M. F.
Wedderburn, Sir D.
Whitworth, B.

TELLERS.

Nolan, Major J. P.
Power, R.

NOES.

Agnew, R. V.
Alexander, Colonel C.
Allcroft, J. D.
Allsopp, H.
Anstruther, Sir W.
Archdale, W. H.
Arkwright, A. P.
Ashley, hon. E. M.
Assheton, R.
Barrington, Viscount
Barttelot, Sir W. B.
Bates, E.
Bateson, Sir T.
Beach, rt. hon. Sir M. H.
Benett-Stanford, V. F.
Bentinck, rt. hn. G. C.
Beresford, Lord C.
Birkbeck, E.
Blackburne, Col. J. I.
Boord, T. W.
Bourke, hon. R.
Bowyer, Sir G.
Brown, A. H.
Bulwer, J. R.
Buxton, Sir R. J.
Cameron, D.
Carington, hon. Col. W.
Cartwright, F.
Cecil, Lord E. H. B. G.
Chaine, J.
Chaplin, H.
Childers, rt. hn. H. C. E.
Christie, W. L.
Clifford, C. C.
Cobbold, T. C.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Cordes, T.
Corry, J. P.
Cotton, W. J. R.
Courtauld, G.
Crichton, Viscount
Cross, rt. hon. R. A.
Cuninghame, Sir W.
Davenport, W. B.
Davies, R.
Denison, W. E.
Dickson, Major A. G.
Digby, Col. hon. E.
Eaton, H. W.
Edmonstone, Admiral Sir W.
Egerton, hon. A. F.
Egerton, hon. W.
Elliot, G. W.
Elphinstone, Sir J. D. H.
Ewart, W.
Ewing, A. O.
Fitzwilliam, hn. W. J.
Fletcher, W.
Folkestone, Viscount
Forester, C. T. W.
Forster, rt. hon. W. E.
Fremantle, hon. T. F.
Gathorne-Hardy, hn. A.
Gathorne-Hardy, hn. S.
Gibson, rt. hon. E.
Giffard, Sir H. S.
Giles, A.
Gladstone, W. H.
Goldney, G.
Gordon, Sir A.
Gordon, W.
Gorst, J. E.
Goschen, rt. hon. G. J.
Goulding, W.
Grant, A.
Grant, Sir G. M.
Grantham, W.
Greenall, Sir G.
Gregory, G. B.
Grosvenor, Lord R.
Halsey, T. F.
Hamilton, rt. hn. Lord G.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hamilton, hon. R. B.
Hamond, C. F.
Hankey, T.
Harcourt, Sir W. V.
Hartington, Marq. of
Harvey, Sir R. B.
Hay, rt. hn. Sir J. C. D.
Herbert, hon. S.
Hermon, E.
Hervey, Lord F.
Heygate, W. U.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hinchingbrook, Visc.
Holker, Sir J.
Holland, Sir H. T.
Holms, W.
Home, Captain
Howard, E. S.
Hubbard, E.
Ingram, W. J.
Isaac, S.
Jenkins, D. J.
Johnstone, H.
Jolliffe, hon. S.
Kennard, Col. E. H.
Kensington, Lord
Kingscote, Colonel
Knowles, T.
Lacon, Sir E. H. K.
Laurie, R. P.
Lawrence, Sir T.
Learmonth, A.
Lee, Major V.
Leighton, Sir B.
Leighton, S.
Leslie, Sir J.
Lewis, C. E.
Lewisham, Viscount
Lindsay, Colonel R. L.
Lindsay, Lord
Lloyd, S.
Lloyd, T. E.
Lopes, Sir M.
Lowther, hon. W.
Lowther rt. hn. J.
Macartney, J. W. E.
Mackintosh, C. F.
M‘Arthur, W.
M‘Garel-Hogg, Sir J.
Makins, Colonel
Mandeville, Viscount
Manners, rt. hon. Lord J.
Majoribanks, Sir D. C.
Marten, A. G.
Master, T. W. C.
Merewether, C. G.
Miles, Sir P. J. W.
Mills, A.
Mills, Sir C. H.
Monk, C. J.
Montgomerie, R.
Montgomery, Sir G. G.
Moray, Col. H. D.
Mowbray, rt. hon. J. R.
Mulholland, J.
Noel, E.
Noel, rt. hon. G. J.
Northcote, rt. hn. Sir S. H.
Onslow, D.
Parker, C. S.
Peel, A. W.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Pemberton, E. L.
Pender, J.
Pennant, hon. G.
Percy, Earl
Phipps, P.
Pim, Captain B.
Plunket, hon. D. R.
Powell, W.
Puleston, J. H.
Raikes, H. C.
Ralli, P.
Ramsay, J.
Read, C. S.
Repton, G. W.
Ridley, E.
Ridley, Sir M. W.

Ripley, H. W.
Ritchie, C. T.
Rothschild, Sir N. M. de
Round, J.
Russell, Sir C.
Sackville, S. G. S.
Salt, T.
Samuda, J. D'A.
Sanderson, T. K.
Sandon, Viscount
Sclater-Booth, rt. hn. G.
Scott, M. D.
Seely, C.
Selwin-Ibbetson, Sir H. J.
Sidebottom, T. H.
Simonds, W. B.
Smith, rt. hon. W. H.
Smollett, P. B.
Somerset, Lord H. R. C.
Stanhope, hon. E.
Stanhope, W. T. W. S.
Stanley, rt. hn. Col. F.
Stanton, A. J.
Starkey, L. R.
Steere, L.
Stewart, J.
Sykes, C.
Talbot, J. G.
Tavistock, Marq. of
Taylor, rt. hn. Col. T. E.
Thwaites, D.
Thynne, Lord H. F.
Tollemache, hon. W. F.
Tremayne, J.
Wallace, Sir R.
Walter, J.
Watney, J.
Watson, rt. hon. W.
Wheelhouse, W. S. J.
Whitley, E.
Wolff, Sir H. D.
Wynn, C. W. W.
Yarmouth, Earl of
Yeaman, J.
Young, A. W.

TELLERS.
Dyke, Sir W. H.
Winn, R.

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Committee *appointed,* to draw up an Address to be presented to Her Majesty upon the said Resolution:—Colonel DRUMMOND-MORAY, Mr. JAMES CORRY, Mr. CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER, Mr. Secretary CROSS, Mr. Secretary STANLEY, Mr. WILLIAM HENRY SMITH, Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH, Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON, Mr. SOLICITOR GENERAL, Mr. EDWARD STANHOPE, Mr. BOURKE, Viscount BARRINGTON, and Mr. ROWLAND WINN, or any Three of them:—To withdraw immediately:—Queen's Speech *referred.*

SEED POTATOES (IRELAND) BILL.

(*Major Nolan, Mr. George Browne, Mr. P. J. Smyth.*)

[BILL 58.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Major Nolan.*)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: The principle of this Bill is one of which the Government entirely approve. We certainly do not approve of some of the methods which the hon. and gallant Member proposes to adopt, and it is a Bill which, in many respects, will require amendment. The matter, however, is one to which we attach a great deal of importance, and there are several proposals which we should desire to see introduced into the measure. In the first place, we do not think there ought to be any time wasted; and, on the other hand, we are also of opinion that the time which the hon. and gallant Member proposes for re-payment is rather short. There are other points also to which I shall desire presently to call his attention, and upon which I think I shall be able to show him amendments are desirable. The course which I propose to adopt is, therefore, to agree to the second reading of the Bill, and to commit it *pro formâ,* in order that there shall be no unnecessary delay, the object to be attained being one on which we are all entirely agreed. I, for one, have not the least desire to delay the second reading of the Bill.

MAJOR NOLAN said, at that hour of the night, after the long debate on Irish affairs which had just ended, he would not weary the House by going into the details of this question. He might say, however, that he had been looking over the records of the House, and he found that there had never been any regular Committee on the important subject of the potato disease at any time. There were some Reports on the matter; but there had never been any thorough examination of the subject. He believed there were some parts of Ireland where the cultivation of the potato was very badly conducted. That was a point of the greatest importance, for the people ought to be taught the most scientific method of dealing with this root. It was a plant which was not propagated in the ordinary way like other plants in agriculture from the seed, but was a tuber. It was remarkable that the varieties of potato which had been introduced within the last 15 or 20 years were those which were found most successfully to resist the disease. He would not give his own opinion further on the matter that night, especially as there were many points which demanded a great deal of inquiry, and as to which he believed an abundance of evidence would be forthcoming. It was certainly quite clear that great success had been occasionally attained in the cultivation of this root. In his own county neither the Champion nor the Magnum Bonum had failed, while the disease had attacked almost every other sort. For his own part, he believed if they had a Committee that means might be found, if not wholly to extirpate the disease, at any rate to stop it to a very large extent. As also the crop of potatoes in Ireland alone was worth £10,000,000 a-year, besides many millions both to England and Scotland, it would be of the utmost importance to collect all the scientific evidence on the subject. He did not mean this Committee to go into any political or social question, but merely to ascertain what were the scientific facts bearing on this disease.

Mr. J. LOWTHER: As a Royal Commission is, at the present time, inquiring into the agricultural depression in Ireland and other parts of the United Kingdom, we might question the expediency, in ordinary times, of opening an inquiry into this special branch of the subject with which they are dealing. Under the peculiar circumstances, however, I quite agree with the hon. and gallant Member in his desire for a Committee, and in the object which he hopes to attain. At any rate, that Committee will not open up any dangerous form of agitation.

Major O'GORMAN hoped that these experiments would not be entered upon this year. They had quite enough to do to provide the people with proper seed, without undertaking anything else. They need not, at all events, enter into scientific experiments with regard to the propagation of the potato. That might be deferred till more prosperous times.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

POTATO CROP.

Select Committee *appointed*, "to inquire into the best means of diminishing the frequency and extent of failures in the Potato Crop."—(*Major Nolan.*)

ACROBATIC PERFORMANCES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Edward Jenkins, Bill to prevent the exhibition, in places of amusement, of Acrobatic Performances dangerous to life and limb, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Edward Jenkins, Mr. Ashley, Mr. Ritchie, Mr. Justin M'Carthy, and Mr. Edge.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 66.]

PRINTING.

Select Committee *appointed*, "to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the Printing executed by Order of this House, and for the purpose of selecting and arranging for Printing, Returns and Papers presented in pursuance of Motions made by Members of this House:"—Mr. Spencer Walpole, The O'Conor Don, Mr. Stansfeld, Mr. Sclater-Booth, Mr. Dodson, Mr. Massey, Mr. Whitbread, Mr. Mitchell Henry, Mr. M'Laren, Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Rowland Winn, and Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson:—Three to be the quorum.—(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson.*)

MEDICAL ACT (1858) AMENDMENT (NO. 3) BILL.

On Motion of Lord George Hamilton, Bill to amend "The Medical Act, 1858," *ordered* to be brought in by Lord George Hamilton and Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 67.]

House adjourned at a quarter before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 11*th February*, 1880.

MINUTES.] — Public Bills—*Ordered—First Reading*—Gun Licence Act (1870) Amendment * [69]; Inhabited House Duty and Income Tax * [70].

Second Reading—Medical Act (1858) Amendment * [10].

Committee—Report—Seed Potatoes (Ireland) * [48-68].

The House met at Two of the clock.

QUESTION.

INLAND REVENUE—CUSTOMS RE-ORGANIZATION AT LIVERPOOL.

Mr. TOLLEMACHE asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the re-organization of the Clerical Branch of the Customs at Liverpool is yet completed by the Treasury; if so, whether it is on the same basis as that recently granted to the London Customs clerks; and also, will it, like London, take effect from April 1879, in accordance with the promise of the Financial Secretary stated in the House on 19th June 1879?

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON, in reply, said, that the Treasury, in September last, sent to the Board of Customs a complete scheme affecting the out-door Customs service at Liverpool; but several objections were taken to it, and those objections were now being considered. It would not be "on the same basis as that recently granted to the London Customs clerks;" but he could say that, whatever the completed scheme might be, it would, as in London, take effect from April 1879, in accordance with the promise made on behalf of the Treasury in June of last year.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

THE ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

Report of Address *brought up*, and read a first and second time.

AFGHANISTAN—EXPENSES OF THE WAR.

MR. FAWCETT, in rising to move as an Amendment, at end of paragraph 8, to insert the words—

> "But humbly desire to express our regret that, in view of the declarations that have been made by Your Majesty's Ministers that the war in Afghanistan was undertaken for Imperial purposes, no assurance has been given that the cost incurred in consequence of the renewal of hostilities in that Country will not be wholly defrayed out of the revenues of India;"

said, he could assure the House that he regretted having to interpose with this Amendment upon the Report of the Address; but he thought he should be able to show that the responsibility as to the course he had taken did not lie with him, but with Her Majesty's Government. Upon the first night of the Session he asked the Government to give the House information as to the Afghan War, as he wanted to know who was to bear the expenses of it. The Secretary of State for the Home Department, in the absence of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, promised to produce Papers on the subject, and said that they would be printed and laid on the Table on the morrow, and would be found to explain the whole affair. That seemed to him (Mr. Fawcett) to be a suggestion of an extraordinary character; but he waited for the Papers, and when he read them he found that they had as much to do with the question of the apportionment of the cost of the war as the Criminal Code Bill or the Noxious Gases Bill. In fact, he might as well have been told to wait for those Bills. Consequently, he felt bound to put another Question on the subject, and in reply the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that he was not prepared to make any statement at present upon the subject. For that reason, he (Mr. Fawcett) was compelled to move his Amendment. If the House did not receive any statement now, they ought to have an assurance that one would be made before long, for it would be most inconvenient if some statement of the views of the Government was not made before the House was asked to consider the Budget. It was quite obvious that in speaking of Afghanistan and the war there were many questions which would have to engage the attention of the House. They would have to consider the past events which led to the war; next, the future policy of the Government when the war was completed; thirdly, the important questions connected with the conduct of the war in regard to the people of Afghanistan; and, fourthly, the most important question, as far as he was able to judge, of who was to pay the expenses of the war. He would on this occasion carefully abstain from saying anything on the first three matters, as he was anxious not to introduce any question of a controversial character into the debate, and the few remarks which he should make might be made by the staunchest supporter of the Government and their Afghan policy. It seemed to him to be clear that the expenses of the war should not be borne by India; and he wished to explain that, so far as India was concerned, this was not to be regarded as a matter of generosity, but of justice and legality. If it could be proved that India was bound to pay these expenses, he would be the last man to ask for any contribution from England, if it were asked for as a mere piece of generosity—in fact, as an eleemosynary gift, as was suggested. Nay, if a contribution were offered in the spirit of charity he could not accept it, but would be the very first person to come forward with a protest, because he knew perfectly well that if India were to receive £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 in the form of a gift, directly they introduced a system of subvention or grants in aid of India, every guarantee for economy would be swept away; and that gift would be a *damnosa hereditas*, which would, in the end, cost India more than the amount of the gift she received. The matter must be decided on grounds of strict justice and legality, and in regard to it he wished to endorse the principle laid down last Session by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he said that India must stand upon her own bottom. If she could not do so, it would be better at once to proclaim her insolvency. This was not the first time that he had come forward to maintain and assert the financial independence of India. Upon a far more critical occasion, when India was seriously oppressed by a terrible famine, and when there was a praiseworthy and generous feeling in this country that they should come forward and assist India with Imperial funds—although he knew it was an unpopular thing to do, he opposed the suggestion, and took the earliest opportunity of saying rather than that India should receive this Imperial aid it was better that additional taxation should be imposed upon her, although he well knew what trouble and sorrow that would cost her. Therefore, he thought he might fairly claim that he was not putting forward this plea simply for the first time. What he wished to point out, and what he did object to, was that it seemed impossible to extract from the Government any declaration of principle upon the subject. Last year the Government adopted the most novel of propositions—one described by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of London (Mr. J. G. Hubbard) as being a financial monster —that was to say, £2,000,000 sterling were lent to India, free of interest, towards assisting her in defraying the expenses of the Afghan War. Now that £2,000,000 advanced by England, free of interest, for seven years, when it would have to be repaid, would cost England about £320,000, and at that time it was estimated that the cost of the Afghan War, which was supposed to be concluded by the Gundamak Treaty, would be £2,600,000. But he never could extract from the Government whether they intended to advance this loan, free of interest, as a gift to India, or whether it would be in discharge of a legal obligation. If it were a gift, it ought never to have been offered; and if it were the discharge of a legal obligation, he could only say it was a contemptible discharge, when it was borne in mind that if they accepted the joint liability of the two countries, according to this arrangement, for every £1 contributed by wealthy England, £7 was contributed by poor India. He noticed in a speech recently made by the Under Secretary of State for India that he dwelt upon the considerable improvement that had lately taken place in some of the branches of the Indian Revenue. In saying that, he did not wish prematurely to force on a discussion upon the Indian Budget. He could only say that no one would more rejoice than himself if it turned out that there was real improvement in the prospects of Indian finance. One thing he had ventured to say, that any Government that would pursue a policy of strict economy in India would reap a rich harvest of results. It would be in the recollection of the House that little more than eight months had elapsed since the Government, awakening to the true financial situation in India, resolved to change the policy which had been pursued by successive Governments, Liberal and Conservative, and introduce greater economy. That policy had only been pursued for eight months; and he believed that when the Under Secretary of State introduced his Budget he would be able to show that, short as was the time since this policy was commenced, it had already borne fruit, and was likely to bear more fruit in abundance. Although there had been improvement in some branches of Indian Revenue during the current financial year, yet he thought they could not too carefully bear in mind the wise and cautious remarks made on Saturday last by the Secretary of State for India (Viscount Cranbrook) when he received one of those numerous deputations that came to the India Office from Lancashire about the cotton duties, and when it was pressed upon his Lordship's notice that he was bound to repeal the import duties on cotton goods. On that occasion, he most wisely reminded the deputation that although there was this improvement in some branches of the Revenue, on the other hand, there never was a time when, in all probability, the demands on the Indian Revenue would be so large as they would be during the present year. But the point he wished to bring more especially under the notice of the House was to be determined solely by the character of the Afghan War, and not by the financial condition of India. If it could be proved that the war was purely an Indian war, then, whatever was the financial condition of India, he would cordially join with the Government in saying that every shilling of the expenditure should be borne by India; but, on the contrary, if it could be shown, as he believed it could be beyond all possible dispute, that the war was not an Indian war, that it was an Imperial war, then he would be able to show that we were bound alike by justice, and what was more important, by the strict interpretation of the law, as contained in the Act of 1858, not to demand that the whole cost of it should be borne by India. On the contrary, a considerable portion should be borne by England. On this point there was no room for doubt whatever. If India had any legal standing in a Court of Justice she would dispute her liability to pay the whole of these expenses. He would ask the attention of the House to the 55th section of the Government of India Act (1858), and the interpretation put upon that section when it was introduced into the Act. That section was introduced by the late Lord Derby, when Prime Minister, in the House of Lords. His Lordship said the object of the clause was that when Indian troops were employed beyond the Frontier of India, and engaged in an Imperial war, the expense should be borne by England; if in an Indian war, it should be borne by India. He also said the character of any war in which the troops were engaged beyond the Frontier would have to be determined in Parliament. Therefore, the House would see that they were bound to take this fact into their consideration. Now, what light could be thrown upon the character of this war? It was a remarkable thing that every speech made in that House or out of it, by Ministers or their supporters on the subject, showed that the war was a great Imperial enterprize; those who opposed the war having always been taunted as being "parochial" politicians, who could not appreciate the magnitude and importance of great Imperial enterprizes. The only exception to this was last year, when the House, considering the question of who should bear the cost, the Chancellor of the Exchequer attempted to whittle it down in its proportions, and called it an Indian Frontier war. But he (Mr. Fawcett) maintained they could not run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, or blow hot and cold with the same breath. He would refer to the speeches of the Viceroy of India, the Prime Minister, and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs upon the subject. The Viceroy of India said, in a remarkable statement, after frequent communications with the Marquess of Salisbury, who was then Secretary of State for India, that he went to India instructed to treat the Indian Frontier question as an indivisible part of a great Imperial question, mainly dependent for its solution upon the general foreign policy of the Government. There was something stronger, however, from the Prime Minister. In December, 1878, the noble Earl warned the Peers that they must extend their range of vision, and told them that they were not to suppose that this was a war which simply concerned some small cantonments at Dakka and Jelallabad, but one undertaken to maintain the influence and character, not of India, but of England in Europe. Now, were they going to make India pay the entire bill for maintaining the influence and character of England in Europe? A still later declaration, made by the Marquess of Salisbury, was during the Recess at Manchester, and the interpretation put upon it by every journal that supported the Ministry was that his Lordship treated the war as indissolubly connected with the Eastern Question. Therefore it seemed to him (Mr. Fawcett) that it was absolutely impossible for the Government, unless they were prepared to cast to the winds their declarations, to come down to the House and regard the war as an Indian one. If they did, they would be bound to repeal the 55th section of the Act of 1858. He found that the public journals desired not to treat Indian questions as Party questions; and they said, too, that it would be unjust to make India pay the whole expenses of the war. He thought it, moreover, a remarkable fact that all those journals which supported the Government had appealed to it not to do an act which would bring contempt upon their policy. It was easy to see why there should be a desire on the part of Conservatives not to let India pay the whole expenses of the war, as it would then be impossible to maintain that the character of the war was Imperial. In bringing forward his Amendment he had no desire to force the Government to enter into details; all he desired from them was a declaration of principle, and he should be perfectly satisfied if someone representing the Government would get up and say that they had always considered this war as an Imperial one, for the expenses of which England and India were jointly liable; or he should be content if it were even announced that the decision of the Government on the question would be made public before the English Budget was brought forward. If India was to bear the entire cost of the war, the sooner that fact was made known the better; and if England was to bear her share of it, it was desirable that Members of that House should be acquainted with the determination of the Government on the subject before they proceeded to discuss the Budget. If either of these courses was adopted he should at once withdraw his Amendment; but if his request was refused, then he should feel it to be his duty to take the opinion of the House upon the Amendment of which he had given Notice, and which he now begged to move.

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the eighth paragraph, to add the words "but humbly desire to express our regret that, in view of the declarations that have been made by Your Majesty's Ministers that the war in Afghanistan was undertaken for Imperial purposes, no assurance has been given that the cost incurred in consequence of the renewal of hostilities in that Country will not be wholly defrayed out of the revenues of India."—(*Mr. Fawcett.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. ONSLOW said, that while on many Indian questions he was able to agree with the hon. Member for Hackney, he was unable, on the present occasion, to support the hon. Member's Amendment, because it affirmed that the troops which were now being used in m'eul were not being employed to pro- this lo'dia, but for Imperial purposes. India, or w'eep Indian questions free charge of a leg'derations, he felt bound a gift, it ought'd not look upon the offered; and if it weAfghanistan as one undertaken altogether for Imperial purposes. In his judgment, that war was necessary for the safety of our Indian Empire, whatever secondary effect it might have had on European politics. Whether it had any connection with any action that had been taken by the Government in Europe he would not at present say; but he did affirm that the war was a just and a necessary one, and had it not been undertaken the whole of the British Empire in India would have been imperilled. The present war did not stand upon the same footing as that of 1878, which had been brought about in consequence of certain steps taken by Russia. The troops now in Cabul were engaged, not in an Imperial war, but in avenging an insult to our arms, which, if left unpunished, would have created disaffection in India. He agreed with Lord Lytton when he said that the Revenue raised from a population of 200,000,000 of people was sufficient to bear the cost of a war for the protection of our Indian Empire. It would be very bad policy to say to the Indian people—"You may do as you please—you may involve us in war, and then we will bear the whole of the expense." The first duty of India was to preserve her Frontier. He thoroughly endorsed the policy of the Government in spending the money it had done in making railways through the two great Passes. Such undertakings, though, in the first instance, they had been constructed for military purposes, would eventually become commercial lines, and would do far more for India than would any present or future relief of famine, for they would tap and bring trade from the North-West of Afghanistan. For his own part, he thought that it was of far greater importance to complete these lines of railway, and to spend rather on them all the money that could be spared, than that large sums of money should be spent on irrigation works. He looked upon these two railways as necessary for the safety of our Indian Empire, which was the primary consideration of our rule in the East. Whether India was to pay in future for the military occupation of Afghanistan was, however, a question for serious consideration. Alluding to the present position of our troops in that country, he believed that some time would elapse before we could leave it with honour. As regarded, however, the more immediate question, he thought it was incumbent upon the resources of India to meet the expenses that had been incurred for the punishment of those who had murdered, or had been implicated in the murder of, our Envoy. For the reasons he had given he was unable to support the Amendment.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR said, he had hitherto abstained from publicly discussing the questions raised about our invasion of Afghanistan, because so many able men of different shades of politics treated the subject as one affecting our relations with Russia; whereas, in his judgment, it ought rather to have been looked at from a financial point of view. Without having a good state of finance, it was contrary to all past experience to carry out any policy in a satisfactory manner. Believing, then, that the finances of India were not in a condition to bear the expenses of a great war, he must publicly avow that he had hitherto been opposed to the war from a mere pounds, shillings, and pence view. From the very first he had told his friends that the expense of the Afghan War would be far greater than was anticipated, and the views he had expressed at various times were borne out by the latest accounts of expenditure. Moreover, it was admitted on all sides that India was not able to bear the whole of the charges for the war. He was sorry to see, by the last telegraphic despatch, that the war expenditure had been increased by £1,000,000, or to about £19,255,000, being £3,946,540 in excess of the military expenditure of India, 1875-6, the last year in which that charge had remained unaffected by our preparations against Russian aggression. This large excess of charge, of course, was occasioned by the great expense of the troops now employed in Afghanistan. With 50,000 men, of whom 20,000 were Europeans, now engaged in or under orders for the Afghanistan War, it was clear that the annual cost of carrying on that war could not be less than from £6,000,000 to £7,500,000 sterling. These statements, he admitted, rested upon his own responsibility; but still he had a good knowledge of the course that expenditure must assume. There was no analogy between the present and the first Afghan War; for, on that occasion, Native troops formed the greatest portion of the Force. No one could study the figured statements of the military expenditure of India during the last few years without being alarmed at the annually-increasing outlay. In 1875-6, as already stated, the military charges amounted to £15,308,460. In the year 1876-7 following, the increase was nearly £500,000—namely, £15,792,112. In the year 1877-8 the charge was £16,639,761, or more than one and a third millions above that of 1875-6. In the year 1878-9, the accounts of which were not yet closed, the military charge was estimated at £16,948,190. In 1879-80, the first estimate was for £18,255,000; but, by the recently-received telegraph, this has been increased to £19,255,000; so that in four years the excess of military expenditure had been £7,401,223 over that which would have been incurred if the standard expenditure of 1875-6 had not been departed from. Further than that, no one could guess when this excess of cost would cease, because we could not say when we should be able to retire with safety from Afghanistan. It was impossible even to guess the extent of complications, because retirement from a position once taken up was always attended with danger in the East. We had already occupied Candahar, and would possibly have to extend our march to Herat, and he could not conceive a time when it would be possible to retire from Candahar. Believing, then, that the finances of India could not bear the strain of the war, he therefore cordially supported the hon. Member for Hackney in his demand that the Government should declare whether or not they intended to make India pay the whole cost of this war. If the expectations of an Indian surplus for the present year were realized—and he would quite admit that, from the latest despatch, the Revenue of India had increased very considerably—yet the expenditure had increased in a similar proportion. His contention was that if this expenditure for war in Afghanistan had not been incurred here, a better use could have been made of the money. In the two last years of which the accounts had been rendered—namely, 1876-7 and 1877-8, the charges exceeded the Revenue by £5,765,865, in addition to which the capital laid out on public works extraordinary amounted to £8,600,336. The question, indeed, of the finances of India was one of surpassing importance. The Asiatics would bear much oppression in various ways; but the point at which they raised the strongest objection was when increased taxation bore heavily, as it now did, on the people of India; and it was obvious that with an excess of charge of £14,366,201 in the two years for which the accounts had been closed, India could not meet the war liabilities without increased taxation. So far from resorting to this resource, he would urge, therefore, that relief should be given to India in the matter of taxation, and, rather than defray the cost of this war, it would be politic for England to come to the aid of India. The House should recollect that since 1852 not a single war had been undertaken in connection with India unless for Imperial considerations. Only a part of the charges for these several wars had hitherto fallen on England; and as this war against Afghanistan was clearly the outcome of our complications in Europe, therefore the chief, if not the entire, cost should be borne by the Imperial Exchequer, and not by India.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL said, he was rather anxious to hear what the Government had to say on the subject before committing himself to any opinion thereon. There were one or two points, however, on which he might make a few suggestions. He was not at all clear whether the Government were really within the law in charging the expenditure in Afghanistan to the Indian Revenue. The House was aware that the law most distinctly laid down that no expenditure beyond the Indian Frontier could be charged to India without the consent of Parliament. In the last Afghan War that sanction was accorded by Parliament. But they were told that that war had been concluded by a peace. Such, at least, was the declaration of the Government. At all events, he deemed it a question whether the new expedition into Afghanistan did not require anew the sanction of the House before any part of the expenditure could be charged to India. He should be glad to know, too, whether, if it was a new war, the Government considered that Afghanistan had been brought within the Indian Frontier? There was another point on which he would like some explanation, and that was whether the Government, in carrying on the railways that had been alluded to towards Quettah, had had the expenditure sanctioned by the authorities authorized to sanction such undertakings. He would remind the House that by law the Expenditure of India and the control over the same were intrusted, not to the Secretary of State, but to the Secretary of State in Council. Of course that applied to direct expenditure. No doubt, the Governor General of India could not be prevented from making war, nor could the Secretary of State be prevented from directing him to make war; but he (Sir George Campbell) had never understood that the doctrine could be carried to this extent—that the Secretary of State or the Governor General could make a railway out of the Revenues of India without the sanction of the Council of India. He believed it was a very good thing to carry these railways to Quettah, if not to other places; but he wanted to know whether the Secretary of State had authorized their construction as far as Candahar, and especially whether the expenditure had been sanctioned by the legal custodians of the Revenue? He gathered that the authorities at the India Office knew nothing whatever on the subject. He always thought that the estimates for the Afghan War had been far below what the real cost would be, and he had taken a good deal of trouble to ascertain the views of competent military authorities on the subject; and he warned the Government that they had in no degree realized the amount and character of the expenditure which must be incurred if it was necessary, as stated in Her Majesty's most gracious Speech, to maintain our troops for some time in Afghanistan. Every military man would tell them that the present Army could not carry on much longer. The Native Army had already been overworked, and we scarcely realized how small the really efficient portion of that Army was. Although we had a Native Army of 120,000 men on paper, a small proportion were fit for foreign service, and that proportion had excessive work imposed upon it. A portion of that Army—7,000 strong—had been brought to Malta, and they had been told recently by a writer, not difficult to recognize as an official scribe of the Government of India, with what joy and rapture the people of India contemplated their departure to Europe. That statement was too ridiculous and contemptible to call for remark; but he would admit that the scheme of bringing these troops to Europe was carried out in a very creditable and successful manner. But he would have them bear in mind that these troops were among the most efficient in the Native Army, and that it was necessary to pay them well for their services. Since that expedition, they had been employed in large numbers in Afghanistan, and also in the Eastern Frontier of India, and he ventured to tell the House that that was a considerable matter. In the opinion of all military men, we could not continue to employ them without relief, without the gravest danger of discontent, if not something worse. If the Government did not make up its mind to withdraw from Afghanistan, it would be absolutely necessary largely to increase the Native Army, if only for the purpose of relieving the men. They could not always bear up against such arduous duties.

MR. GORST said, if the object of the hon. Member for Hackney (Mr. Fawcett) was merely to raise a discussion and enable him and his Friends to press their views on the Government, no complaint could be properly made against him; but, certainly, the Government would have a right to complain if he pressed his Amendment to a division, and asked the House to find fault with them simply because, as prudent and reasonable men, they had wisely abstained from binding themselves to a conclusion at the beginning of the Session as to what proportion of charge should fall upon India for the expenses of a war in Afghanistan which had not yet been concluded. He thought it was a little hard for the hon. Member for Hackney to blame the Government for having abstained from pronouncing any final determination on that matter. With regard to the remark of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell), that the expenses of the present Afghan War could not be a legal charge upon the Revenue of India, he thought the hon. Member was to some extent in error. That, of course, entirely depended upon the question whether the present war was independent and separate, or a mere continuation of the war which broke out in 1878. It was said the Government had stated that the war of 1878 had been brought to a conclusion. Everyone thought it had been brought to a conclusion. If people said that war had come to an end, it did not follow that a continuance of that war was the undertaking waging a new war. He, however, presumed such to be the opinion of the Government, from the fact that they had not thought it necessary to summon Parliament last autumn for the purpose of obtaining its sanction. As to the statement of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy with reference to the necessity of increasing the Indian Army, he would observe that there were contingent troops in the protected States; and he had no doubt that if a call were made by the Indian Government upon the Princes of those States, those contingent troops might be made available. No doubt, when the war was ended, the Government would come down to the House and state the expenses and be prepared to give reasons for any apportionment they might think it right to make; but at present the question raised by the Amendment was not ripe for the decision either of the Government or of the House.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT said, that, in his opinion, the hon. and learned Member who had last spoken (Mr. Gorst) misapprehended somewhat the position of the hon. Member for Hackney (Mr. Fawcett), who had intimated that if the Government made a statement in accordance with his well-known desire that those charges should not be borne by India he would be satisfied, and would not press his Amendment to a division. He said that if the Government would, before the English Budget was brought in and the financial arrangements of the year concluded, give an opportunity to him to express his views upon the subject he would be quite satisfied. He (Sir William Harcourt) thought that that was a very reasonable demand. If the matter were to be introduced after the financial arrangements of the year had been completed, the Government might say—"Oh, but it is too late to open the question now." The hon. Member for Hackney and his Friends only now wanted to enter their caveat before it was too late. He (Sir William Harcourt) would not go into the whole question; but there were some views upon the subject of Afghanistan which he should like to submit to the consideration of the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India. One great difficulty he had always found in criticizing the conduct of the Government was to hit upon exactly the style in which they liked to be criticized. The style that he had attempted had not been favourably accepted by Members of the Government; but at last he had found a solution of the question which he was sure would be satisfactory to them. He was going to offer some remarks to them on the subject of Afghanistan in language to the style of which they could offer no objection. After he had read, in language far better than his own, the expression of sentiments which were those he held, he would tell the hon. Gentleman who was the author of those sentiments, and that on the occasion of a former Afghan War, when the circumstances were similar to those attending the present one, the following language was employed:—

> "According to the right hon. Gentleman, the internal state of India previous to the invasion of Afghanistan was of a very peculiar kind. According to him there was an indefinable restlessness in the public mind, a strange uneasiness, a singular and alarming looking forward to something they knew not what, an apprehension of something unknown, a mysterious conviction, founded on no facts, authorized by no events, that 'the star of England was no longer in the ascendant,' and it was necessary, the right hon. Gentleman assured us, that this expedition should be undertaken in order to re-establish the confidence of the people of India in our 'star.' He told us that we had quite succeeded in producing the desired effect. . . . Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman may inform us to-night how the 'confidence in our star,' which, according to him, is the foundation of our Indian Empire, stands since the re-capture of Ghuznee. He really did hope that in these hard, dry, matter-of-fact, Income-tax days, statesmen would be prepared to offer some more substantial reasons for their policy than the expediency of restoring 'confidence in their star.'"—[3 *Hansard*, cxiv. 448.]

The same authority on which he was relying further said—

> "If he believed that 'confidence in our star' alone, or principally, constituted the tenure on which we held India, he should despair of holding that country for any considerable period."—[*Ibid*, 449.]

Then he proceeds to say, and he asked the attention of the Under Secretary to it—

> "He would take the liberty of mentioning to the House, what, in his opinion, were the elements of our Indian tenure. He did not believe that we should be deprived of that Empire either by internal insurrection or by the foreign invasion. If ever we lost India, it would be from financial causes. It would be lost by the pressure of circumstances, which events, like the war in Afghanistan, were calculated to bring it about by exhausting the resources of the country in military expeditions, and by our consequent inability to maintain those great establishments which were necessary to the political system that we had formed and settled in Hindostan."—[*Ibid.* 449-50.]

Those were his own sentiments, and he hoped the language in which they were expressed was satisfactory.

MR. ONSLOW: May I ask the hon. and learned Gentleman for the date of them?

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT would tell the date presently. And now for the reasons given for the invasion of Afghanistan—

> "There must have been some reason to induce us to invade regions which had baffled the greatest conquerors, some reason for bringing about a state of affairs which forced the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government to direct the attention of the House to the propriety of seriously taking into consideration the state of our Indian finances."—[*Ibid.* 455.]

The speech next went on to say—

> "The late Ministers of the Crown, those fortunate Gentlemen who proclaimed war without reason and prosecuted it without responsibility, would have an opportunity to-night of throwing some light upon these circumstances; they would have an opportunity to-night of telling us why that war was entered into. Would they tell us that it was necessary to create a barrier for our Indian Empire? When he looked at the geographical position of India, he found an Empire separated on the east and west from any Power of importance by more than 2,000 miles of neutral territory, bounded on the north by an impassable range of rocky mountains, and on the south by 10,000 miles of ocean. He wanted to know how a stronger barrier, a more efficient frontier, could be secured than this which they possessed, which nature seemed to have marked out as the limit of a great empire. But they wanted a barrier. A barrier against whom? Who was the unknown foe against whom we waged these mysterious wars, to baffle whom we attacked chieftains who were not our enemies, invaded countries with which we had no quarrel, incurred ruinous expenditure, experienced appalling disasters? The foe could not be Russia."

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> "Oh! then it was Russia. The noble Lord (Lord Palmerston) did want a barrier against Russia—with the noble Lord's peculiar views he was not surprised at this. The noble Lord had always been suspicious of that country. He had appealed to Europe against Russia. He had made men ambassadors because they had written pamphlets against Russia. He had established a periodical work for the sole purpose of opening the eyes of the people of Eng-

> land to the designs of Russia. And now the noble Lord wanted a barrier against Russia for India. But was India violated? If they wanted a barrier against Russia for the sake of India, they wanted a barrier against Russia for the sake of England. Was England to be inactive if Russia invaded India? India was part of England. He (Mr. D'Israeli) protested against the principle that if our empire in India was menaced by Russia the struggle was to be confined to Asia."—[*Ibid.* 455-6.]

There was another passage which he would commend to the attention of the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India—

> "If all this were true—if it were true that this expedition had been undertaken to check Russia, if this were explained the expression of the late President of the Board of Control, that it was necessary to produce a moral effect on Europe—he should like to know on what grounds the people of England could refuse to do what a great authority had expressed a few nights back as 'paying the bill.'"—[*Ibid.* 456.]

These sentiments were expressed in excellent language, and he would be extremely glad to hear the reply of the hon. Gentleman to them. Again the speaker said—

> "The noble Lord's system appeared to be this:—'I am the Minister of a powerful country, and I can always extricate myself from any difficulties by force.' Now, in his (Mr. D'Israeli's) opinion, this was not the mode which should be employed by the head of our diplomacy, by one whose arts should essentially be the arts of peace. This use of a giant's strength was neither generous nor politic. This system might be for a moment successful. It might take Ghazni and capture Acre; but the ultimate effect of such a policy must be to embarrass our finances and rouse against us the prejudices and passions of independent states."—[*Ibid.* 459.]

It was impossible, he (Sir William Harcourt) considered, to express more accurately the sentiments entertained by the Opposition with regard to the Afghan War, and he trusted he had at last found a style in which the hon. Gentleman would have the conduct of the Government criticized. The language he had just quoted was the language of the present Prime Minister. It was the language of Mr. Disraeli in speaking of the late Afghan War, and they were the sentiments which he himself felt with regard to the present Afghan War.

MR. E. STANHOPE asked the hon. and learned Gentleman to oblige him with the volume of *Hansard* from which he had been reading.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT said, he did not suppose the hon. Gentleman required to learn from *Hansard* the drift of the last Afghan War. They knew that even at the India Office. He was glad, therefore, to see the Under Secretary was going himself to reply to the statement of the present Premier. When those statements were so expressed—accurately and eloquently expressed—they deserved the attention of the Government, and he also thought they were well worthy of and would command the consideration of the people of this country.

MR. E. STANHOPE said, he would at once admit that the hon. Member for Hackney (Mr. Fawcett) had strictly adhered to the line he laid down for himself at the opening of his important and interesting speech, that he would avoid any subject of controversy. He (Mr. E. Stanhope) was afraid, however, he could not say so much for the hon. and learned Gentleman who had just sat down (Sir William Harcourt). He would only say this as to the excellent quotation the hon. and learned Gentleman had just read—that he could only explain the hon. and learned Gentleman's conduct in this way—having discovered it, he was so dreadfully afraid of other Members making use of it that he could not lose a single instant, but dragged it in on a subject to which it did not in any way relate. But, as the hon. and learned Gentleman had used the quotation, he should like to ask him what happened in 1842, when the noble Lord now at the head of the Government made that most powerful and effective speech. Did the Government of that day contribute a single shilling to the expenses of the last Afghan War? Not a single penny. The expenses of the war were paid by India without any protest from persons in the position of the hon. and learned Member. He really did not, however, want to detain the House by dealing with matters of controversy; everybody must be perfectly aware that the circumstances had entirely changed since the date to which the hon. and learned Gentleman had referred. We must consider the question, and decide our course with regard to the contributions, if any, which England might make towards the expenses of the Afghan War, under the altered circumstances of the case. The hon. Member for Hackney laid down some excellent financial principles, which he (Mr. E. Stanhope) appreciated very highly indeed. He hoped the hon. Gentleman would continue with his usual force to press them upon the House on every convenient occasion. But when he came to his legal principles, he must say that neither the hon. Member, nor the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell), were very happy in their references to the 55th clause of the Government of India Act. First of all, there was the question of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy. He said—"I want to know, if this is a new war, why you did not obtain the assent of Parliament, in accordance with the Government of India Act?" His (Mr. E. Stanhope's) answer to that was that it did not matter, because, if it was an old war, the consent of Parliament was already obtained in 1878; while, if it was regarded as a new war, then he did not think any Member of that House would venture to dispute that under the Government of India Act the consent of Parliament was not required in the case of sudden and urgent necessity. Again, the hon. Member for Hackney maintained that England was compelled by law to make some contribution to the expense of the war; but all that the Act said was that before the Revenues of India could be applied to the purposes of an external war the sanction of Parliament must be obtained. The Government did obtain the sanction of Parliament in December 1878, and they then said they would reserve for future consideration—when events had developed themselves—what course they ought to take with regard to the incidence of that expenditure. Last year application was made to them by the Government of India for assistance in the peculiar circumstances they were placed in, owing to the very great depreciation of the value of silver, and they asked Her Majesty's Government for a loan of £2,000,000 without interest, in order that they might be able to reduce for the current year the drawings that were necessary. After full consideration, Her Majesty's Government agreed to grant that loan to India without interest. In the course of the debate on that loan, it was urged, on the one hand, that we should contribute a much larger share towards the expenses of the war. On the other hand, some hon. Members, including the hon. Member for Maidstone (Sir John Lubbock), thought that we should look on the Eastern complications as a whole, that our main interest in the Eastern Question was the maintenance of our route to India, that England had made considerable sacrifices in the maintenance of that route, and that, so far from having contributed too little, it might be urged that England had paid too large a proportion of the whole charge. The House approved of the course adopted by the Government. There had since been a renewal of hostilities; but what Her Majesty's Government complained of in the Motion of the hon. Member for Hackney was that it was altogether premature. His hon. and learned Friend the Member for Chatham (Mr. Gorst) had put the case very clearly when he said that it was absolutely impossible to arrive at a definite conclusion in the absence of further information, and that it would be hard to blame the Government because, in the absence of that information, they refused to come to any absolute conclusion. They knew that hostilities had been renewed, and that further expenses had been incurred; but the new facts in relation to that expenditure were not yet in their possession. He believed he was right in saying that before many weeks—he might almost say before many days—were over, they would have the figures of the Indian Budget at hand. They certainly hoped before the end of the month to have an estimate of all that had been spent or was likely to be spent up to the end of the financial year on the war in Afghanistan, with a good estimate of what the probable expenditure would be in the future. When they had obtained that information the Government would thoroughly consider the whole position, and see how they stood in that matter; and he hoped that there would be ample time to do so before the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced the English Budget. He could not help thinking that the mode in which the hon. Member for Hackney had brought the question forward was rather calculated to weaken his own case, because he alleged that as the campaign in Afghanistan which resulted in the Treaty of Gundamak was undertaken entirely for Imperial purposes and was the outcome of European complications, therefore England ought to have contributed a large sum towards its cost; and he went on to say that as the renewal of hostilities had occurred England ought to contribute to the cost of this war also. But the hon. Member must surely have felt that the retort might be made to him that the renewal of hostilities had not been the result of any European complication, but the consequence of the Envoy of the Indian Government having been treacherously murdered in Cabul. He would not, however, press that point, because he did not desire in the least to prejudge the question before them. He was quite sure that when the Government came to consider it, they would wish, on the one hand, to be just, and even liberal, to India, and would be anxious, on the other hand, to bear in mind the great principle of the hon. Member for Hackney, which could not be too often borne in mind—namely, that India should not be made a financial burden to this country. He believed it would be the greatest misfortune to India if it could be said that she was becoming a financial burden to England, and that, therefore, England must cast her off. Now, what the hon. Member for Hackney asked for in his Amendment was a sort of vague announcement to the Government of India that when the proper time came England was prepared to pay a certain proportion of the expenditure they incurred. Could any more dangerous step be taken than that? Why, if his noble Friend Lord Lytton and Sir John Strachey really entertained any of those grand designs and mischievous schemes which were sometimes imputed to them, he could not imagine that they would desire anything better for the carrying out of those projects than to learn that they might go on with them because England would be ready to provide the means for their execution. Therefore, in now asking the House to reject the Amendment, he only desired to add that they did not by that course in any way prejudge the question, but only expressed the opinion that the Amendment was premature, and that they must postpone their decision on that subject until they had received further information.

MR. W. E. FORSTER said, he was glad to find that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer was now present to supplement the remarks made by the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India, as it would be unfortunate if the right hon. Gentleman did not give some further assurances on the subject. He (Mr. Forster) hoped that he might be allowed to re-state the appeal which the hon. Gentleman had made at the close of his remarks. He said he did not think the present was the time to open up a discussion upon the expenditure now being incurred, nor upon the Frontier policy of the Government in India. In that he (Mr. Forster) agreed with the hon. Gentleman, and that any such debate at present would have been premature; but, on the other hand, he had no doubt that it was not only his own opinion, but that of many hon. Members, that this was a question which would have to be again considered by the House, and that before long. Perhaps he might be allowed to say that in consequence of certain rumours, on very high authority, and the answers given in this place by the right hon. Gentleman opposite (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) and the Prime Minister in "another place" yesterday, it became all the more necessary that the House should very soon have an opportunity of considering the policy of the Government, especially as regarded their North-Western Frontier in India. The hon. Member for Hackney (Mr. Fawcett) had stated that if the Government would give him an assurance that they would lay their views on this question of India paying part or the whole of the expenditure connected with the war before the House before the English Budget was produced, he would withdraw his Amendment. But from the statement of the hon. Gentleman opposite, it appeared that it was still doubtful whether the Government had or had not decided whether this country should be partly included in meeting the expenditure. He (Mr. Forster) did not think, however, that his hon. Friend would press the Government to a decision then; but his request that the House should know what was the view of the Government before the English Budget was brought in was one which must commend itself to every hon. Member. He understood the Under Secretary of State for India to hold out the hope that the House should be informed of the views of the Government before the introduction of the Budget;

but they had been so often informed that in a very few weeks, or in a very few days, certain statements would be made, though their coming had been delayed, that he thought it necessary to ask for some more definite statement that the Budget would not be presented while the House was in the dark on the subject of defraying the war expenditure in India. At present they did not know whether India would be partly relieved or not of the cost, because it appeared the Government had not come to a decision on the point. If no information was given before the Budget, the Government might, after presenting it, alter their views, and then there would be a Supplementary Estimate; or it might be the case that the feeling of the majority of the House would be that help should be given to India. He trusted that the Government would give such an assurance to the hon. Member for Hackney as would enable him to withdraw his Amendment—that assurance being that their views on the subject would be placed before the House before the Budget was brought in. Before sitting down he wished to refer to a remarkable observation of the hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Onslow). He said he agreed with the proposal of the hon. Member for Hackney last year —that help should be given to India to meet the expense of the war, but that he did not think help should be given now for taking vengeance for the murder of the British Envoy at Cabul. Well, he (Mr. Forster) thought it was not very difficult to see from what was going on in India that the revenge of that terrible act was not the only object for which expenditure was being incurred there. Therefore the hon. Gentleman's remarks were disproved by the actual facts, which were clear to most people. The same hon. Member held that the preservation of life from famine was hardly to be considered in comparison with the importance of maintaining the honour and security of the Empire. Well, he (Mr. Forster) should be very sorry to think that this was the view entertained of Her Majesty's Indian subjects by the House, or that the people of India should think we entertained it. They all knew what famine was, and they knew what it was to meet it, and what were the attempts that had been made in the past to save people from death from famine; but when they came to the question of the honour and security of the Empire there would be sure to be difference of opinion. Some would think that the security of the Indian Empire depended upon "the scientific frontier," while other persons would hold that it did not. But when they were dealing with 200,000,000 of Indian subjects, liable to those terrible visitations of famine, it was most advisable that the Government should make it their first duty to protect so many lives from perishing. In conclusion, he would again express the hope that the assurances which the Government were prepared to give would enable his hon. Friend the Member for Hackney (Mr. Fawcett) to withdraw his Amendment.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER trusted the House would clearly understand that it was not from any want of respect to the House or from any disregard of Public Business that he was not present at the time the hon. Member for Hackney addressed his remarks to the House. His absence had been caused by very pressing public business elsewhere. He knew, however, that he would be well represented by his hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for India (Mr. E. Stanhope). He did not for one moment undervalue the very great importance of the question raised by the hon. Member for Hackney (Mr. Fawcett). It was a subject of considerable financial and also one of still greater political importance. It raised, indeed, questions of the very highest political significance, and it ought certainly not to be dealt with cursorily or prematurely. The House was generally aware of the view which the Government had taken on former occasions of the question of the incidence of warlike expenditure in India; and he would not now say anything more on that subject. But he entirely agreed with the hon. Member for Hackney that the matter was one which ought to be very carefully sifted and discussed; and he also agreed that it ought to be considered before they settled what were to be their own financial arrangements of that kind. He could, therefore, undertake—and he understood this to be the principal object of the hon. Gentleman in now raising the question—that before the House was asked to vote anything connected with the financial arrangements of this country for the present year the question of whether financial assistance should be given to India should be brought under its notice, and it should have the opportunity of considering whether, in the financial arrangements for this year, it would be right to make any provision in regard to Indian expenditure. At the present moment, as they had been reminded by his hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for India, they were not in possession of the actual financial position of the Indian Government or of the expense which had been incurred, and for that reason, if for no other, it would be premature to express any opinion on the subject at present. But he thought that probably the undertaking which he readily gave to the hon. Gentleman that the House should have an opportunity of discussing that question before it bound itself in any way to the financial arrangements of this year would be sufficient, and that there would be no occasion to go to a division on the Amendment.

Mr. FAWCETT said, he was entirely satisfied with the assurance which had been given on the part of the Government that the House should have an opportunity of discussing the question before the Budget was introduced, and would, therefore, beg leave to withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND).

Mr. O'DONNELL, in rising to move that the following Amendment be added to the Address:—

> "That while wasting the resources and straining the honour of the State in unjust aggressions abroad, the Ministry have endangered the peace and neglected the interests of the Country at home: That when the attention of Her Majesty's advisers was called during last Parliament to the approaching distress in Ireland, they only replied with insulting mockery; and that when the distress deepened, and the inhabitants of the afflicted districts sought to move public opinion by peaceable meetings, the Government adopted an attitude of provocation, and answered the Petitions of the starving cultivators by arbitrary arrests and displays of military force: That the Ministry seek to stir up evil passions and prejudices between the English and Irish peoples: That they sedulously describe as seditious and disloyal the Constitutional endeavours of the Irish representatives to establish improved relations between Ireland and the other portions of Her Majesty's Dominions, and to bring about a better distribution of the legislative work which now overburthens the Imperial Parliament: That when any English party or English politicians seek to promote the removal of Irish grievances, they are denounced by the present Ministry to the prejudices of the unthinking and unreflecting as bad patriots and enemies of England, and there can no longer be a doubt that this policy has been adopted for the purpose of obtaining a factious and calamitous success at the approaching General Elections: And that, therefore, in face of such misconduct, we have no alternative but to beseech Her Gracious Majesty to dismiss from Her Councils Her present advisers, in order to prevent the further practice of abuses more dangerous than open treason to the State,"

commenced by referring to the misrepresentations of the policy of the Irish Party, which had been put forward on behalf of the Government, and said he had no doubt that those misrepresentations were put forward for Party purposes. Her Majesty's Government had raised a new cry. It must be admitted that they were sadly in want of one. The Government had been long appealing to the country, for some years past, on the ground of their vigorous defence of the interests of the country; but now they knew what was the nature of that so-called vigorous defence, and of the misfortunes and dangers into which that policy had plunged the country. He had never supported either the policy of the Opposition, or that of the Government; and certainly no man without prejudice could approve of the policy of the Government on the grounds either of humanity or of honour. On the Eastern Question the Government had supported Turkey in a policy of resistance against Russia, and then made an underhand agreement with Count Schouvaloff; while at the moment when general peace might have resulted by joining in the Councils of Europe, they made a surreptitious agreement with Turkey by which they obtained Cyprus. In South Africa, the policy of the Government had been attended with equally unfortunate results. While the Government were picking a quarrel with the Transvaal, they were encouraging Cetewayo, whom they subsequently turned upon and hunted down. Previous to the war with the Zulus, great outcries were made against the Boers, because they were taking the Swazi people as auxiliaries, on the ground of their barbarity; but now the Government had been glad to avail themselves of the services of those same savages, notwithstanding their barbarities. In Afghanistan the action of the Government was to be loudly condemned, and every Indian independent organ did emphatically condemn it as evincing a policy which had not hesitated to confiscate even the fund raised as a safeguard against famine. The result of the policy adopted by the Government in India was that every year the people were becoming poorer and poorer, and were gradually sinking into poverty, for which he did not blame the English officials so much as the home authorities, who so constantly distracted their attention with wars beyond the Frontiers. He condemned the action of the Government in enlisting under their banner the wild Afridis, between whom and the Cabulees there were sanguinary feuds, and there were few men who knew India that did not believe that if an escort of White men had been sent with Cavagnari no massacre would have taken place. Now that the foreign and colonial policy of the Government was no longer a sufficient rallying cry for their supporters, they had raised the cry of "Down with the Irish people!" and even English Members who stretched out their hands to help their Irish brethren were condemned without exception. He would defend particularly the policy of the hon. Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell), for it was this policy which was alleged by the supporters of the present Administration as a justification of their vigorous attacks and their charges upon Ireland. The hon. Member for Meath had not taken any action until all the responsible bodies representing Irish public opinion had in vain endeavoured to obtain a favourable response from the Government. The agitation of the hon. Member was a strictly legal and constitutional agitation, and was owing to the dreadful state of a country abandoned to despair and starvation, to all appearance, by the scornful and despotic attitude of the Administration. Last year, he (Mr. O'Donnell) had seized an early opportunity of impressing upon the Government the necessity of taking measures to meet the severe agricultural distress, and had been supported by the hon. Member for Longford and by a number of other Irish Members. The only reply vouchsafed by the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland was one which could not in any way be regarded as satisfactory—indeed, the Irish Members considered that it had hardly come within the bounds of Parliamentary decorum. He found in the Irish papers of the 31st May that the Catholic clergy of the extensive deanery of Westport—the present scene of the most terrible destitution—had passed a resolution declaring that such was the misery in which the peasantry, according to their own knowledge, were plunged, that it would be absolutely impossible for those tenants to pay the full extent of their rents to their landlords during that year. He would ask the House whether any stronger proof of destitution could be brought forward than that a body of Catholic clergymen—the recognized and responsible guardians of the rights of property — should come forward and declare that a large number of tenantry were unable to pay their rents in consequence of the national distress? In the Irish Press of the 7th June, the Catholic clergy of Claremorris, in the same vicinity, each person speaking for his own parish, declared similarly that such was the destitution of the country that it would be impossible for the tenantry to pay their rents without reduction during the year. In the Irish Press of the 21st June, Catholic clergymen of Killaloe, Dungarvan, Galway, and elsewhere, numbering more than 200, and covering a space of territory from North-West right down to South-East—the whole coast of Ireland, and which was now the scene of the gravest distress—all these inflexible guardians of the public weal declared publicly that such was the misery of their people that it would be impossible for the tenantry to pay their rents, and large and generous reductions must be made—that the district, in fact, was on the verge of ruin. Were not these testimonies worthy of the consideration of Her Majesty's Government? Similar declarations were made in the National Press of June 20, and in the Irish Press of the 5th July; and among the other evidences of the public misery he would cite the admirable letter of a Galway landlord, Miss Eyre of Clifden Castle, stating that all over Connemara there were already scenes of harrowing misery, and corresponding announcements subsequently appeared. It was now time to speak explicitly of the policy of Her Majesty's Government. Had this been satisfactory—had it been generous—had it been even respectful for the misery of the Irish people? On the 23rd June, after Westport, after Claremorris, Killaloe, Dungarvan, and Galway had spoken out on the public misery, he (Mr. O'Donnell) had addressed a Question to the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant for Ireland as to the state of agricultural distress in that country, and whether the Government proposed to take any steps to alleviate it. That was a good opportunity for the Government to act in such a manner as to revive confidence in their intentions and kindly feeling. The right hon. Gentleman, however, had replied that he had no official information—in fact, no knowledge at all — of the clerical expressions which had been communicated to him, but that it was a subject of regret to the Government that agricultural distress existed in many parts of the United Kingdom, and that it was a satisfaction to the Irish branch of the Government that they had reason to believe that that distress, though unhappily prevailing, was less acutely felt in Ireland than in many other parts of the Kingdom. What other parts of the Kingdom, he (Mr. O'Donnell) would ask, were witnessing such distress, and had caused such resolutions to be passed by persons locally in the best position possible for knowing the whole subject? There was to be a discussion, he was loftily informed, on the Motion of the hon. Member for Mid-Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin), for appointing a Commission to inquire into agriculture. That was the way he was answered when pleading for people who were approaching a state of starvation; and the right hon. Gentleman had added the insulting flippancy of an observation that "at any rate the Government were not going to bring in a Bill for the reduction of rents." The first Circular of the Government proposing any measures, however unworthy and ineffectual, was dated the 14th November. Accordingly, from the 23rd June to the 14th November—through all these weary and miserable months—the Irish people—and the Irish agitators, if hon. Members wished to say so—were left to their own conclusions as to the reasons held by Her Majesty's Government for withholding a single measure of relief or a word of sympathy for a starving people. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in the previous night's debate, had supplied the House with a reason why the Government did not come forward previously to the 14th November to speak a word of hope to the miserable population. He would be extremely sorry to utter a word to misrepresent the answer which the right hon. Gentleman gave to the Irish Deputies; but hon. Members present would be able to correct him if he should inaccurately re-produce them. The astounding reason why the Government had kept silence even in the face of agitation, why the Government had kept silence even in the face of respectful protestation, why they had kept silence even in the face of acknowledged misery, was that they were afraid that if the Irish people were allowed to believe that the Administration would come promptly forward to their assistance with measures of relief, they would consume much more rapidly any little stores they had in hand. They had now the reason why the Government preferred to allow the people to be plunged into despair, and to be exposed to the seductions and incitements of agitators—why they left them to spin out as long as possible the miserable remnant of provisions which they had left. He did not think that in the history of the British Administration of Ireland any words could be quoted of such unconscious brutality as those used by the right hon. Gentleman on the previous night. As an individual, no doubt, the right hon. Gentleman was a generous man—everything an Englishman should be. He had simply expressed the policy of the Government; and while the Government had been loftily and scornfully playful with the Chief Secretary for Ireland, the friends of the people had had to relieve their distress and plead their cause. In his references to the Chief Secretary for Ireland—he was sorry to see that the right hon. Gentleman had chosen this time to leave the House—in his references to the ignorance, both official and non-official, so ostentatiously displayed by that right hon. Gentleman, he did not especially blame him, for on the Opposition side of the House they were not disposed to take too seriously the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland. They were not unaware of his antecedents. They did not know that he had made any noise in the world; but they did know that he had made curious noises in that House on certain occasions. He had matriculated with high honours in the imitation of animal sounds department of Conservative obstruction. They only regarded him as the man—the functionary—the Government had appointed to preside over the maladministration of Ireland. In the face of the Government apathy it was for the friends of the people of Ireland themselves to be up and doing, and foremost amongst them was the hon. Member for Meath. That hon. Member had had pressed upon him the function abdicated by the Government. He had had forced upon him the duty neglected by the Lord Lieutenant for Ireland, and he had to come forward—with the certainty of being misrepresented—to stand in the gap and to lead and support by his presence and ability the agitation of the Irish people. During the weeks of the Parnell agitation, he (Mr. O'Donnell) denied that any illegitimate or illegal sentiment had been put forward, or that they worked for anything except for the welfare of the Irish people. The hon. Member for Meath and his Colleagues had been exposed to much calumny in the great work of protecting the lives of the people. The policy of the agitation in Ireland was two-fold. In the first place, they supported the traditional platform of Irish tenants, they demanded fixity of tenure at fair rents, and they demanded the programme of the Home Rule Party. Secondly, they laid great stress on the necessity of a peasant proprietary in Ireland; but it was false to say that they ever proposed confiscation in Ireland. The hon. Member for Meath simply proposed the purchase of the land by the Government. He proposed not confiscation, but purchase; not spoliation, but the process of law and a constitutional arrangement. There was not the least truth in the statement that the hon. Member for Meath contemplated any measures of confiscation in Ireland. Then, what was the defence of the Government? They said that they did not do anything sooner from the fear of encouraging extravagance amongst the starving population. And what was the action of the landlords? To their honour, be it said, that many of them came forward and contributed to the relief of the distress; but, as a rule, there was no voice of comfort to be heard amongst the proprietors of the land, just as there was no voice of comfort to be heard from the official classes. All that the hon. Member for Meath said was that the people who could not pay their rent, finding that the landlords and the Government were silent, would be justified in keeping their rents back to feed their children; and then, when the law turned them out on to the roadways, they would have a few miserable shillings or pounds to go on with. What was there immoral or illegal in that? If the premises to that argument was admitted, the conclusion could not be denied. The argument was that there were people who were not able to pay their rent, and who knew that even the payment of part of the rent would not save them from eviction. Their legal obligation had its rights, but there was also a natural law; and if they were to be turned upon the roadside they were justified in keeping back the poor pounds and shillings they possessed. Such would not have been the case had the Government come forward and said that they would not allow the people to starve, even if evicted. But the Government was dumb—it was afraid to encourage the extravagance of a starving people. As a heroic remedy, the hon. Member for Meath was right in saying that the people should disregard the law which strangled them; and if they were to go out on to the roadside it should be with something in their pockets to save them from the awful doom of the Famine of 1847. In saying that, the hon. Member for Meath and his Colleagues were neither traitors to their Sovereign nor rebels to the laws. Then the hon. Member for Meath had been accused of the responsibility of an armed resistance—of the armed resistance of the bare hands of starving women to the serving of notices of eviction! Why did not some Member of the Government come forward and say to the landlords—"Although you are right in law, do not press evictions on a starving population." In one village the children threw themselves at the feet of the ministers of the law, and the women threw themselves in the mud and implored for consideration.

And it being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till *To-morrow*.

MOTIONS.

GUN LICENCE ACT (1870) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Sir ALEXANDER GORDON, Bill to amend "The Gun Licence Act, 1870," *ordered* to be brought in by Sir ALEXANDER GORDON, Mr. CLARE READ, Mr. M'LAGAN, and Mr. MARK STEWART.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 69.]

INHABITED HOUSE DUTY AND INCOME TAX BILL.

On Motion of Mr. HUBBARD, Bill to amend the administration of the Inhabited House Duty and Income Tax, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. HUBBARD, Mr. SAMPSON LLOYD, Mr. LEATHAM, and Sir CHARLES FORSTER.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 70.]

House adjourned at ten minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 12*th February*, 1880.

MINUTES.]—*Sat First in Parliament*—The Earl of Durham, after the death of his father.

PUBLIC BILLS — *Second Reading* — Workmen's Compensation* (5), *discharged.*

Second Reading—Referred to Select Committee—Employers Liability (4).

PRIVATE BILLS.

Ordered, That this House will not receive any petition for a Private Bill after *Friday* the 12*th day of March* next, unless such Private Bill shall have been approved by the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice; nor any petition for a Private Bill approved by the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice after *Monday* the 3*rd day of May* next:

That this House will not receive any report from the Judges upon petitions presented to this House for Private Bills after *Monday* the 3*rd day of May* next:

Ordered, That the said orders be *printed* and *published*, and affixed on the doors of this House and Westminster Hall. (No. 6.)

PERSIA AND HERAT.

EXPLANATION OF STATEMENT.

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD: My Lords, a misconception has arisen with respect to an answer which I gave the noble Earl opposite (Earl Granville) a few evenings ago in reference to communications which have been going on with Persia. I do not think there was any foundation for that misconception; but it is a subject on which there ought to be no error. I therefore wish to say now that what I desired to communicate to your Lordships—and which I believe I did communicate—was this—that during the measures which we have for some time been taking to effect the settlement of Afghanistan we received communications from the Persian Government, that those communications have been not infrequent, but that they have hitherto led to no conclusion. With regard to the specific statement that we had released the Persian Government from their engagement not to occupy Herat, that is an entire misconception.

EMPLOYERS LIABILITY BILL.

(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

(NO. 4.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that before the measure was carried through its present stage he wished to say a word with reference to further proceedings in regard to it. He had stated a few nights ago that the Goverment hoped his noble Friend (Earl De La Warr), who had another Bill—an alternative measure—on the same subject down for second reading to-night, would be satisfied with giving his valuable assistance in the labours of the Select Committee to which he hoped the Government Bill would be referred, and would not ask the House to come to a determination on the question of the second reading of his measure. He could assure the noble Earl that his suggestion did not arise from a desire to prevent his noble Friend from bringing any of his propositions before the Select Committee. The Government were anxious that every proposition should be fully and deliberately weighed by the Committee; and if his noble Friend would, as he hoped he would, consent to serve on the Committee, it would be in his power to oppose any clause in the Bill, and to offer, by way of amendment, any part of his own measure. On the other hand, he would point out to the noble Earl the difficulty there would be in passing the second reading of both Bills. If they were passed, the House would be committed to the two, and it would be a question which should be proceeded with first. He hoped the noble Earl would allow his Bill to remain in abeyance at the present time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^{a}."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

Earl DE LA WARR said, that, after the explanation given by the noble and learned Earl as to the course which he proposed to pursue, he could not object in any way to the suggestion he had made. He hoped the matter would be settled in a manner satisfactory not only to employers of labour, but also to the employed. The question involved was one which agitated the minds of a very large number of persons; and he trusted that on the Committee to which the Bill was to be referred both sides of their Lordships' House would be represented. No fewer than 400 or 500 Petitions had been presented last year in favour of the Bill he had introduced; and he believed he should not be exaggerating if he said that the subject of it interested no less than 500,000 people.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2^{a} accordingly, and *referred* to a Select Committee.

And, on February 26, the Lords following were named of the Committee:—

Ld. Chancellor.
Ld. President.
D. Somerset.
M. Ripon.
Ld. Steward.
E. Derby.
E. Shaftesbury.
E. De La Warr.
E. Powis.
E. Morley.
V. Cranbrook.
L. Zouche of Haryngworth.
L. Colville of Culross.
L. Belper.
L. Houghton.
L. Penzance.
L. Selborne.
L. Blackburn.
L. Norton.

THE DISTRESS IN IRELAND.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

Lord EMLY: I wish to ask the Lord President, Whether, having reference to the failure of the Labour Rate Act in 1847 to relieve distress and its mischievous and demoralizing effects, while the system of food distribution substituted for it was completely successful, the Government propose on their own authority to re-introduce into Ireland a system, which on account of its admitted failure was abandoned, without waiting for the sanction of Parliament? I need hardly assure the noble Duke that the Question I put to him, and these remarks, are not dictated by Party feeling. In my opinion, the measures proposed by the Government to meet the distress in Ireland have been wise, with one single exception. In making the exception I believe I shall be joined by every noble Lord in the House, upon whatever side he may sit, who recollects the great Irish Famine. Neither can I accuse the Irish Government of delay. I know that it has been said, no thanks to the present Government if there has been no loss of life. What can be more certain, my Lords, than that the duty of the Government was not to step in until private exertions and private charity were unable to cope with the difficulty? What could be more demoralizing to a community than for the Government to take from the people all motives to exertion? I am bound, however, to say this —that from the accounts I have heard within the last two or three days, on undoubted authority, from the West of Ireland, especially from the counties of Mayo and Roscommon, that the time has now come for the Government measures, and especially the measure for out-door relief for the poor cottier tenant, to be brought into operation. I believe that the last potato in a great number of the houses of those poor wretched people is now exhausted, and upon this subject there should be no delay. Then, with regard to the loans that are being made to proprietors to enable them to give employment on their property; if there has been any delay in this matter, it has certainly not been occasioned by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, for he has shown the greatest sympathy and energy in pressing forward measures for the relief of the people, and I think to him we owe a deep debt of gratitude. His sympathetic energy has been appreciated by every right-minded man. I feel I should not be doing my duty if I did not also express the deep feeling of gratitude we also owe to the Duchess of Marlborough. I believe there is not a house in Ireland in which there has been suffering where the efforts of the Duchess of Marlborough will not be remembered with gratitude; and the attacks which have been made upon her and upon those ladies who worked with her, as well as upon the Lord Mayor of Dublin, who was assisted by the Catholic and Protestant Archbishops of Dublin, breathed more of the spirit of Robespierre and Danton than any speeches which have been made even by the most violent agitators in our time; but the attacks are not doing what they were intended to do by those who uttered them for political motives—drain up the springs of charity—but what they did do was to excite universal indignation. I come now to the order issued by the Lord Lieutenant to hold extraordinary presentment sessions for the purpose of commencing relief works. I hope it is unnecessary for me to say that if I believed this proceeding necessary to relieve suffering, whatever I may think of it in principle, I could not object to it; but I shall be able to convince the noble Duke, whose perfect fairness I know, that this system is not only mischievous but useless. A little more than 33 years ago the Government of Lord John Russell gave exactly the same powers to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. He was authorized to direct the magistrates and selected ratepayers in any barony in Ireland where distress prevailed to assemble in sessions and to present for making new roads, improving old ones, cutting down hills, fencing roads. The execution of the works was to be in the Board of Works. In the month of February, 1846, just four months after this system had been put in operation, Lord John Russell put an end to it. Why? Because it had already broken down. It had from the first been protested against by most men of intelligence and practical knowledge in Ireland, among the rest by my noble Friend the noble Viscount near me (Viscount Monck). All our worst anticipations were fulfilled. Lord John Russell, four months after they had been commenced, put an end to the works because they had demoralized the people, and led to jobbery and waste; because they had cost extravagant sums of money; and, above all, because they had withdrawn the people from the cultivation of the land, and if continued beyond the month of March must have caused another famine in the ensuing year. Let me read to your Lordships the account of the effect of this system given by Sir Charles Trevelyan, one of the ablest public servants I ever was brought into contact with, a man of unwearying energy and strength, and who had been himself the chief organizer and controller of this system of relief.

> "Si Pergama possent
> Defendi dextrâ etiam hæc defensa fuissent."

Where he failed, no one is likely to succeed. Here are his words—

> "Thousands upon thousands were pressed upon the works. The attraction of money wages regularly paid from the public purse, or the Queen's purse, as it was popularly called, led to an abandonment of other descriptions of industry in order to participate in the advantages of the relief works. Landlords competed with one another in getting the names of their tenants placed on the lists, farmers dismissed their labourers, and sent them to the works, the clergy insisted on the claims of their respective congregations. It was impossible to exact from such multitudes a degree of labour which would act as a test of destitution. Huddled together in masses, they contributed to each other's idleness. If the people were retained on the works, their lands must remain uncultivated; if they were put off the works, they must starve."

An English commercial traveller in Ireland gives this remarkable evidence to the same effect—

> "The small cottier tenants seem to take no interest in the land, and have neglected the customary collection of manure. All flock to the public works at Boyle. Small farms are neglected. At Thurles potato grounds are left untilled—people all flocking to the public works. At Galway the fishermen have pledged all their fishing and sailing gear. Three thousand two hundred men, nearly all fishermen, are employed on the public works."

The alarm of the Treasury was expressed in their Minute, 16th March, 1847—

> "Continuance of relief works materially interferes with the prosecution of the ordinary agriculture of the country."

I need not trouble your Lordships with further extracts. It is to me like a bad dream to find that this system, faulty in principle and condemned by experience, has been revived. The only difference between Lord John Russell's Labour Rate Act and the system of the present Government is that the former was to be carried out by the Board of Works—the latter by the county surveyors or contractors. I need not say that in districts where the famine prevails no contractor will be found to undertake works which will cost much more than if executed in ordinary times, and where men would be forced on them, not because they would work, but because they were in want. I ask for attention to two letters from two of these county surveyors, dated the 8th of February of this year. In the first the writer said—

> "There is no use in blinking the question; it will be just a repetition of the misery of 1847 over again. I do not hesitate to say that anything more ill advised, more mischievous, and demoralizing than the whole proceeding never was conceived."

The other, also writing upon the 8th of February, said—

> "The great difficulty in this country will not be in selecting suitable, but in preventing a perfect avalanche of useless, wasteful works, by which the entire population may become demoralized. The applications up to the present are frightful—£8,700 in a barony valued at £18,000 per annum. They are much the same in two others. It is not possible to imagine anything more ruinous. Large sums are applied for on the islands where there never was a wheel or a pony, or anything more than a donkey. There is not a boreen in the country. They are not measuring, so we may look out for cross work at the sessions."

There is another serious evil in this sort of relief—the baronies and the Poor Law Unions are not coterminous. The greater part of the barony in which I live is in the Limerick Union. A small portion of it is in the Union of Croom. Before I left home to attend Parliament I found that there was so much employment in my neighbourhood that strangers would have to be brought in to execute it. What was my astonishment a week ago to find that extraordinary presentment sessions had been ordered in my barony. I wrote to my noble Friend and neighbour, Lord Clarina, and to my agent, to inquire how there could be any want of employment there. My agent made inquiries through the barony, and informed me there was no want of employment. My noble Friend wrote to me to the following effect:—

> "I was as much surprised as yourself on receiving the printed notice of the extraordinary baronial session, and am at an equal loss to know whom we have to thank for this, in my opinion, unnecessary procedure; for, considering that Mr. Walsh, the contractor for the Barnakyle drainage, is unable to obtain half the workmen he requires, and that those he had struck for an increase of wages—although bad men were getting 9*s*. a-week and brats of boys 10*d*. per diem—this does not look as if there was much real distress in our neighbourhood. I gave the men my mind pretty freely as to the unwisdom of quarrelling with their bread and butter, and I believe a good many resumed work. I shall try and get home before the sessions."

I remonstrated with the Government, and have been informed that the sessions were ordered because there is distress in the barony, which is in the Croom division. I do not believe this. My agent's inquiries seem to me conclusive. At all events, the whole transaction shows the great inconvenience of having the providing for relief in districts not continuous and under separate jurisdictions. Why should the Limerick Union pay for the distress in another Union if it supports its own poor? All the stimulus to exertion which self-interest provides is removed by such a system. My Lords, I know it may be said this system of relief works answered in Lancashire during the Cotton Famine. It might as well be said that cotton planting would succeed in Ireland because it has succeeded in Louisiana. The whole circumstances of Lancashire and of the distressed districts in Ireland are different. In the one you have a numerous resident upper class of country gentlemen and manufacturers, and intelligent and middle classes with habits of business. In the other, a number of poor cottiers, with few among them of any class above their own. Take Lord Dillon's estate in Mayo and Roscommon, with a rental of £24,000 a-year, 7,500 tenants, of whom not 10 pay £100 a-year. Besides, the cotton labourers had no land to be taken away from. In districts such as I have described, if the labourers are taken from the land, the distress of this year will develop into famine next year. Then what is to be done? My Lords, what did Lord John Russell do when he found the measure which, with the best intentions, he introduced fail? Why, he withdrew it. It cannot cost you so much to withdraw it as it did him. It is not your progeny I ask you to destroy; it is a discredited bantling you have picked up. Fall back, I beseech you, on giving relief in food and rendering reproductive works. Give the wealthier classes the means of employing labour. If they do not make use of these means make them pay for feeding the people. By doing this you will effectually relieve distress, and you will save a sufficient sum to enable you to provide good seed. This is the really formidable question. You may bring people through the suffering of this year; but if their land is not properly cultivated, and if they have not good seed to put into the ground, the prospects of the ensuing year will be alarming indeed.

VISCOUNT MIDLETON concurred in all that had fallen from the noble Lord. It was admitted that they should do everything in their power to alleviate the distress which undoubtedly prevailed in many districts in Ireland; but he thought the lessons of the past would have been ill-studied if they revived the system of relief which had failed in 1847. He ventured to think that if there was one lesson that stood out more prominently than another in the records of that disastrous year, it was the utter inefficiency of public works to give relief to a starving population. He did not say that on his own authority alone. In the first number of *The Edinburgh Review* of 1848 he had had an opportunity of looking over a paper attributed to the pen of Sir Charles Trevelyan, than whom no man living had had better opportunities of judging or could speak with more authority. He would not quote from that article; but the sum and substance of Sir Charles Trevelyan's arguments, drawn from statistics, were—first, that the works were often of small public utility—so small, that many of them were subsequently abandoned; secondly, that where they were of any public utility they were shamefully and scandalously jobbed; and thirdly—a most serious evil—that no real work was done upon them. The system, moreover, operated prejudicially on the labour market, and it was proved in 1847 that many men preferred taking what they called the "Queen's pay" to doing their own work for their former employers, because they received the whole of the wage in coin, whereas when at work upon the land they had to submit to certain deductions in kind. The consequence of this was that on the estates of many landowners the farmers were completely denuded of labour. He could hardly conceive a system which was more demoralizing than this. He might be told that the checks which the presentment sessions would exercise would be sufficient. He did not think so. When the court-house where the sessions were assembled was surrounded by a hungry crowd it was not easy for men to stand up and resist applications which they knew themselves not to be really genuine. Nor would it be easy for a Government Board, which received applications from magistrates and associated cesspayers, to refuse to undertake works of the utility or inutility of which they could only judge by proxy. Experience had shown that the only way to deal with a man who was really starving was to put nourishing food down his throat as early as possible. Where destitution existed over any great area the crisis could only be met by forming special agencies, and supplementing them in mountainous and remote districts by other agencies which Boards of Guardians and the relieving officers could supply. By so doing they would preserve the self-respect of the people better than by offering them a substantial wage for nominal work. What works were really useful could be instituted by sanitary authorities and by the landowners themselves, who could look after the expenditure, and who had already taken large loans for the purpose within the last three or four months. Ireland was not the only country in which this system of public works had been tried. It had been tried in France, in part of the Austrian Empire, and most extensively in Italy. He could appeal to any of their Lordships who had seen the manner in which public works had been carried out in Italy, whether, instead of being a benefit to the population, they had not proved a positive curse? The kind of machinery required to carry on public works in a proper manner could not be improvised or started at a moment's notice. Of course, matters in Ireland were vastly changed from what they were a quarter of a century ago. In the first place, there was a much smaller population; and, in the second place, the population had been materially raised in the social scale. No one could see the manner in which they were now clothed and housed without being very much struck by the improvement which had been wrought. The means of communication also, which at that time were very bad, had been greatly enlarged. In fact, the whole railway system might be said to have been created in Ireland since the time to which he had referred, and there would be now no difficulty in affording supplies to places at a distance from the coast. Mountainous and remote districts would be far better dealt with by having food brought to the homes of the people rather than by drawing men long distances from their homes to public works; and not only so, but the relief given by public works was not always applied in the way intended, and often when so applied, the food, when obtained, was not prepared in that wholesome and nutritious manner which was necessary when the system had been reduced by privation. That difficulty could best be met by giving food instead of employment. He had been very much surprised, after the very sensible remarks with which the Chancellor of the Exchequer prefaced his statement of the measures of relief intended for Ireland, to find that the right hon. Gentleman afterwards said that the Government had it in contemplation to establish a system which had before proved so great a failure. If they were to sanction those extraordinary baronial sessions they would repeat over again the mistakes committed 32 years ago, and the results to a greater or less extent would be the same as they were then. He most sincerely hoped that those responsible for the welfare of Ireland would hesitate before following a course which had been attended by such disastrous effects.

Lord DUNSANY said, that his memory also went back to the year 1847, and he could fully confirm every word uttered by the noble Lord as to the demoralizing and injurious effects of the hasty undertaking of public works. It was not always those who most needed relief who received it. Very substantial farmers hired out their carts and horses, and they got fat upon the famine. There was a great deal of mischief done by public relief works. He could mention cases where roads, which were most unpicturesquely level, had been found by means of spirit levels to require levelling, and relief works were initiated for levelling them. The result was seen at the present day on the roads, which had been most successfully spoiled. But there was, no doubt, immense difficulty in employing very large masses of the people in times of distress, and he was not sure that they would be able to avoid resorting to presentment sessions. He hoped, however, that the Government would endeavour so to limit the proceedings of those sessions that they should not extend beyond a certain area. It was very desirable that there should be some regulation laid down as to who was to take the initiative. If it were intrusted to every occupier and fussy magistrate he would find plenty to do. There were places in which there was no distress whatever. In his own district, for instance, it was all nonsense to talk about famine. There were many places in Ireland where there was a great deal of factitious distress. It was a great pity that any should exist; but there was a great danger lest it should be extended. With regard to the county surveyors, it seemed to be rather that they were to be the responsible authorities, in a great degree, for expending large sums of money. Their Lordships might not be aware that county surveyors, as a class, were not the right persons exactly to whom to intrust large sums of money.

Even the obvious and practical remedy spoken of by his noble Friend (Viscount Midleton), to supply food to the people, would not be altogether free from danger, for in that there might be jobbery and corruption, at which they were such adepts in Ireland. He took up a periodical called *Truth*, and he found in it a statement that in some districts in Ireland, not named, the recipients of food were the people who least wanted it. In the words of *Truth*, the rich man had the good things and the poor were sent empty away. When the last famine in Ireland was over it was found that the granaries were bursting with food, and that the supplies of food and clothing were more than ample; but the poor people were in such a state of exhaustion that they were unable to go in search of food. The conclusion he came to was that the whole difficulty of the problem was that it must be left very much to the discretion of Her Majesty's Government; and he thought they had shown by what had occurred in "another place" that they had established a great claim to confidence. There were two ways of meeting all dangers—one was the calm and patient way of watching its approach, and the other the ostentatious and fussy way of running out to meet it. Her Majesty's Government had adopted the former, and the result had been shown in a late division "elsewhere," when Ministers, with the Leader of the Opposition, and the Leader of the anti-Ministerial crusade went into one Lobby, while the other Lobby had in it only the small body of irreconcilables. Another point he would allude to, as inseparably connected with the subject. The first thing was to feed the starving people, and the next to prevent future famine. It was tolerably plain that the real cause of famine, in districts where actual famine exists, lay in the fact that there was a large population in places which nature had never designed for its maintenance. Let them look at the Highlands of Scotland, where the climate and soil were of the same kind as in the West of Ireland; and in Scotland there was no population, while in Ireland there was a dense population. According to Irish ideas, the people should be rooted to the soil, while practical people would say they should be detached from it. The idea was unfortunately not popular; but in that House they could express it. It was a mistake to call the people in some parts of Ireland inhabitants, as they were no more inhabitants than were tribes of Arabs in the desert. These people spent eight months in every year away from Ireland earning wages in England and Scotland, while the women and children went on a begging tour. If these people were wise they would emigrate to other parts of the world; but the misfortune was they were taught by their mis-leaders what was the worst thing for their welfare. He was not talking of those half-crazy demagogues who went about the country inculcating landlord robbery and resistance to law; but of persons who were better educated, and who talked about Ireland not being over-populated. *The Nineteenth Century* for December contained a very intemperate article by Mr. O'Connor Power, M.P., which was intended to throw light on the agitation against the Land Laws in Ireland. Those Land Laws, it should be borne in mind, were neither more nor less than the laws which existed in this country. Mr. O'Connor Power told the public that the cause of all the distress was landlordism. To show the iniquity of the landlords, it was stated that they had driven 30,000,000 of Irishmen into emigration. It did not seem to occur to Mr. O'Connor Power that if the wicked landlord had not caused the emigration, Ireland, which was now over-populated, would have had a population 30,000,000 or 40,000,000 larger than at the present time, making cannibalism probable, and infanticide a necessity. Mr. O'Connor Power's remedy for putting an end to famines in Ireland was really too ridiculous to consider for a moment—namely, at an expense of some hundreds of millions, buy out the Irish landlords, and turn the tenants into landowners. Such a proposal could not be regarded as serious. As little practical was Mr. O'Connor Power's scheme for cultivating waste lands—namely, land which even under the Corn Laws no sane man ever attempted to cultivate. He thought he had shown that it was not to "Irish ideas" nor to the leaders of popular agitation that their Lordships ought to look for guidance in this matter.

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN: My Lords, I think we ought to be exceedingly grateful to the noble Lord (Lord Emly) for bringing this subject before the House, as it is one of very great importance. Moreover, we have to thank the noble Lord for informing us that, in his opinion—and there is no one who is a better authority on the subject—the time has now arrived in which it is necessary for the State to step in and to interfere to save the people in some districts in Ireland from absolute starvation. It has been very difficult to judge of the depth and extent of the destitution in Ireland. Alongside of real poverty there exists a great deal of simulated poverty. The noble Lord said that, in spite of the disaffection existing in Ireland, the springs of charity had not been dried up. I can scarcely agree with the noble Lord as to that, for I think that the recent agitation in Ireland, if it has not dried up the well of charity, has rendered it exceedingly difficult to pour its waters into the proper and natural channels. The state of things in Ireland has rendered it almost impossible to tell whether or no private charity is sufficient to meet the requirements of the case, and whether there is any necessity for the State to interfere at all. Practically, I exceedingly dislike State interference in such matters. I look very jealously upon all State interference. I heartily agree with a very eminent Irishman—the late Mr. Daniel O'Connell—in saying that the law that compels the public to support the destitute affords the strongest inducement to scheming knaves to affect destitution in order to be supported at the public expense. I do not mean to say that I agree entirely with a sentiment aimed apparently at the whole plan of Poor Law relief. I am of opinion that there may be cases in which the State is called upon to interfere; but it should be very chary of interference, and when it decides it is absolutely necessary to do so, it should be most careful that the interference should be carried on in the best possible way. I have been very glad to hear the repeated assurances of Her Majesty's Government, that they are keeping a watchful eye on the situation, that they have their finger on the nation's pulse, and are prepared and ready to act with promptitude at any moment in the event of any emergency arising requiring instant action. That is the proper attitude to assume. They have also acted very wisely in offering loans on exceptionally advantageous terms for the improvement of land. It has been objected that the loans should have been given to occupiers. It appears to me that would be impossible. The small farmers could not have given sufficient security. Their interests will, in many cases, be different from, or hostile to, the interests of their immediate neighbours. No works could have been undertaken on a large scale of general utility. The money would have been wasted and misapplied; a great deal of trouble and litigation would have ensued among the farmers, and the country would not have received any permanent benefit from the outlay. So far the Government has acted very wisely; but, in this supplemental plan, this idea of special baronial presentment sessions, they have adopted a plan—with all the experience of the past to guide them—they have deliberately adopted a plan that on a former occasion led to the most disastrous results; and it certainly will prove equally injurious to the country now. It is true that the circumstances of Ireland are different now to what they were 35 years ago; but they are different in a way that renders it only more difficult for this system to be beneficial. Relief works might have proved useful when a superabundant population of labouring men were reduced to the extremity of destitution. It did not prove useful, but, on the contrary, most injurious; and there is not the smallest possibility or hope that it can be beneficial now, when the small farmers are those that are suffering the most, and when there is not an excess of labour in the country. At first sight this plan of relief works sounds as if it ought to be very good. It seems natural that if the State is to supply a man with the necessaries of life, it is well to exact from him some measure of labour as an equivalent. It appears as if by that means a man ought to retain his self-respect; but, on the contrary, experience amply proves that it has diametrically the opposite effect. The plan was tried in 1847, and with what effect? The country threw itself upon the State. The whole nation became demoralized. Not only the labouring class, but all classes—owners, occupiers, small tradesmen, and labourers—scrambled for the public money. All other works were abandoned, the labour of the country was withheld from profitable employment upon the soil. Works of great general public value, such as the arterial drainage of the country, were neglected. At one time as many as 3,000,000 of people—men, women, and children—were receiving wages on those public works—receiving wages for work which they were paid to do, but which they did not do. In many cases they were too enfeebled to work; in other cases they would not labour. The Government were powerless in the matter. They attempted to compel them to work, and failed; they endeavoured to institute task-work, and were unable to do so; their efforts only resulted in adding riot and disorder to the other evils from which Ireland was suffering. The State was expected to do everything for that country; to undertake the functions and business of the whole population—of all the individuals composing the various degrees and ranks engaged in any kind of business and trade. The result was inevitable. It was chaos and confusion. The worst of it was that the soil of the country remained untilled. The same thing will happen again now. Ireland has enjoyed an exceptionally fine winter, spring operations are about to commence, and if the labour of the country is taken away from its legitimate employment in the cultivation of the soil much damage will be done to the country, and a heavy responsibility will be upon the shoulders of the Government. Relief works will produce jobbery, and be abused. I have heard of several instances already in which it has been abused. I know of a case in Limerick, a few days ago, where a gang of 50 men supposed to be reduced to the extremity of destitution were employed by the Corporation at 12*s.* per week. They all struck work for 14*s.* 6*d.* per week and half-holiday on Saturdays, which does not look as if they were starving, or anything approaching to starvation, and I have no doubt that many other such cases have occurred. But because such scandalous cases do occur, we must be all the more careful not to shut our eyes to the amount of distress that really exists. What is to be done to relieve it? The answer is very simple. The experience of the past teaches what is to be done. Whenever the people are starving, you must supply them with food—food so prepared that it cannot be used in any way except as food for the immediate sustenance of the recipients or their families. If a man is starving, the State must interfere and prevent him from starving by giving him food to eat. There is nothing demoralizing in a man receiving charity in such a way. It is not nearly, at all events, so demoralizing as giving a man labour which he pretends to do, but does not do, upon works which he knows to be unnecessary, teaching him thereby to defraud the State. The plan of relief works was, as I have said, tried in the Famine time, and it most lamentably failed. The other system of giving food was resorted to, and was entirely successful. The pamphlet, by Sir Charles Trevelyan, has already been quoted two or three times this evening; but I cannot refrain from quoting another passage in it. Sir Charles Trevelyan, speaking of what is commonly called the "Soup Kitchen Act," says—

> "This was the second occasion on which upwards of 3,000,000 of people had been fed out of the hands of the magistrates; but this time it was effectual. The relief works had been crowded with persons who had other means of subsistence, to the exclusion of the really destitute; but a ration of cooked food proved less attractive than full money wages, and room was thus made for the helpless portion of the community. The famine was stayed. This enterprize was, in truth, the grandest attempt ever made to grapple with famine over a whole country."

If the land requires improvement, by all means give loans on easy terms to enable the owner to improve it. If the people are starving, by all means let the State supply them with food to prevent their starving. But do not attempt to mix the two systems. It has been tried and found to fail. I hope that Her Majesty's Government will think seriously on the matter before, to the many evils existing in Ireland, they add yet another, for the system of special baronial presentment sessions cannot fail to produce evil in the country.

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND AND GORDON: To listen to the various speeches that have been made on this most interesting and important subject which we have had before us, one would have imagined that the one or principal mode of dealing with the distress and famine in Ireland which we have adopted was a return to that system of public works which prevailed at the time of the last Famine in 1846 and 1847. Quotations have been made from pamphlets written by Sir Charles Trevelyan, pointing out the very grievous way in which that system at the time failed, and how unwise it would be to revert to it. The line which Her Majesty's Government have taken in the matter under consideration is as different from the course pursued in 1847 as one system could well be from another. During the debate of four nights in the other House, Her Majesty's Government, instead of being blamed for bringing forward such a proposal as that condemned by those of your Lordships who have spoken, have been told that they have been at fault in not carrying it out to a greater extent. The noble Lord opposite (Lord Emly) lives in Ireland; but there are Members in the other House of Parliament who have quite as much right and knowledge on the subject as the noble Lord himself. In his Question the noble Lord puts forward two points to which I take the liberty of demurring altogether. In the first place, he assumes that we are going to do that which we are not going to do; and, secondly, he assumes that we are not going to do what we are going to do. The Question is somewhat a long one, and I confess—we all confess—with all respect to the noble Lord, that in going over it a first time it did not seem to be quite clear. The noble Lord says that—

> "Having reference to the failure of the Labour Rate Act in 1847 to relieve distress and its mischievous and demoralizing effects, while the system of food distribution substituted for it was completely successful, the Government propose on their own authority to re-introduce into Ireland a system, which on account of its admitted failure was abandoned, without waiting for the sanction of Parliament."

I demur to the statement that we are really introducing a system into the country which has been proved to be a failure by all people. That is exactly what we are not doing; and the former part of the noble Lord's Question would imply that we have done nothing, and taken no steps whatever with the view of meeting the distress.

Lord EMLY: No, no.

The Duke of RICHMOND and GORDON: I have quoted the noble Lord's Question, and I venture to say that the construction to be put upon it as a whole, is, on the one hand, we are not going to give food to the people, but that we are going to re-introduce a system which would make them paupers. I am sorry not to be able to read the noble Lord's Question with the same eyes he seems to read it himself; but the noble Earl who spoke last (the Earl of Dunraven) says he hopes Her Majesty's Government will abandon the system which they have introduced to meet the distress; but it is not a system, and what we are proposing to do by the measure to which the noble Earl has taken exception is merely supplementary to other proposals which we are bringing forward for the purpose. What have we done? We are proposing to grant loans to the landlords, and to local authorities, and it is no fault of ours that a Bill has not been introduced to indemnify us from the effect of proposals we have made, and from the instructions which we have given to local authorities. We have stated that the Poor Law may be amended in order that poor people may receive out-door relief, which they could not receive under the old Poor Law. We have considered the point, and have decided that the poor are to be taken into workhouses, unless the workhouses are full. That is the proposal which we have made. I will venture to call the noble Lord's attention to a letter which has been issued, in which it is stated that it has been represented to the Lord Lieutenant that in some distressed districts there is great want of employment for the labouring classes, owing to the inability of the landed proprietors to find employment, and in consequence extraordinary baronial presentment sessions will be called into existence, after other means have failed. [*A laugh.*] The noble Lord may laugh; but that is the fact. There is reason to anticipate unusual pressure and unavoidable suffering, which the ordinary working of the Poor Law will not be able to meet, and after all these things have been tried and it is found that there is great hardship, then measures are to be called into operation to alleviate the suffering. The noble Lord behind me (Viscount Midleton), who took great exception to the conduct of Her Majesty's Government, says he has every reason to believe that the measures which we have taken will be adequate to the occasion. I say if the measures which have been taken are adequate to prevent the people from starving, then there will be no necessity for putting any supplementary measures into force. On the former occasion public works were executed at the expense of the Government; now these works are to be executed in districts under the supervision of county surveyors. If it is advisable that the works should be executed by contract, then the contractor is bound by the terms set out in this Paper I hold in my hands to employ the people in the district. I can only repeat what I said before, that the measure which has been so much found fault with by the noble Lords opposite and by my noble Friend behind me is not the one measure we bring forward for the alleviation of suffering in Ireland; it is merely a supplementary measure, and we should think ourselves unworthy of the places we hold if we did not endeavour, by the best measures we can adopt and by whatever supplementary means may seem necessary, to prevent suffering and stop that famine which at one time appeared likely to become prevalent in the country.

Viscount MONCK said, that he had a share in administering relief during the Famine of 1847, and what he then saw would never be effaced from his memory. His noble Friend (Lord Emly) had approved of the measures of the Government; but he (Viscount Monck) would be sorry to commit himself to approval of them until he had seen their effect. He could say that he did not approve of the system of relief which was resorted to in 1846 and 1847, and which so signally failed. He did not understand what the noble Duke could mean by saying that this measure, which was to his mind simply a re-introduction of the Relief Works Act of 1847, was a mere supplementary measure to be brought into use after all the other measures of

Government had failed, because he believed that baronial sessions had been called into existence in many districts in which not an ounce of food had been distributed. He entirely concurred with his noble Friend who had spoken last but one, that the experience of 1846 and 1847 proved that the most effective and least demoralizing scheme of relief which could be adopted was to give to the people directly that of which they most stood in need—food, fuel, and proper clothing. It was very difficult to resort to any measures which would not be more or less capable of abuse; but of all the systems which could be devised that which was calculated to do most injury to the people was, he believed, the supplementary proposal made by the Government.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY hoped the Government would not resort to extraordinary means of relief in districts where the effect of the Poor Law had not been tried first, believing that if the existence of distress in certain districts of Ireland was made in any way a pretext for special measures being introduced into districts where no extraordinary distress prevailed, serious injury would be done to the country, by demoralizing the people. Where distress existed to a great extent the authorities should relax the Poor Law, as was done years ago in some parts of England, and he understood that the Government had allowed that to be done. With regard to what had been said about the Government extending the relief more widely than they had done, he trusted they would not depart from the attitude of firmness which they had taken up, and for which he gave them great credit, and would not, in their natural and just desire to relieve real distress, be carried away by popular feeling into the adoption of measures which, however benevolent or charitable they might appear in themselves at the time, might produce results which all would regret. As to baronial presentment sessions, he quite agreed with what had been said by his noble Friends, and he felt greatly afraid that if these public works were carried into effect by the several authorities bad results would follow. There were two safe modes of giving relief—one by carrying food to the people, and the other by inducing persons to find employment, and thus to relieve those who were in distress; and he hoped that the Government, if they should think it necessary that presentment sessions should be held, would still re-consider their decision.

LORD DENMAN said, that in 1836 he had been in Ireland, and that 6*d.* a-day was the pay then of a labourer in the county of Cork. He had seen a model farm in which drainage had been carried on with great advantage. The surface turf, which prevented water from percolating, was made use of instead of tiles, and he hoped the drainage was still open. It had turned fields on the side of barren heath into productive land. He believed that Irishmen would much sooner receive pay for work at a low rate, as suggested by Colonel King-Harman, than be fed in idleness; and if they could work only half a day at a time through weakness, that they would be satisfied with small wages. He was sure that such men as Colonel King-Harman and his friend Major Robertson, Assistant Commissioner in the Agricultural Commission, would prevent imposition; and after alluding to the industry of such Irishmen as were sober, as described by the late Mr. Maguire in his work on the Irish in America, he added that he quite approved of the precautionary measures taken by the Government, which he believed would tend materially to lessen the distress and advance the prosperity of Ireland.

RAILWAY CHARGES ABROAD.

MOTION FOR A RETURN.

THE EARL OF CORK AND ORRERY moved for—

> "A Return of the rate of charges authorized by law, and those actually levied by the different railway companies, in the following countries: France, United States of America, Russia, Italy, Germany, Austria, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Portugal."

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD: To give this Return at the present moment is impossible; but, if by a stretch of imagination I could assume its possibility, I am sure it would be quite useless. The Return the noble Earl requires refers to the railway charges authorized and actually levied in foreign countries. Now, I will take one instance alone to show the difficulty, not to say the impossibility, of giving that Return. In the United States of America every

State has a railway law of its own, and it has unlimited discretion of altering its rates without any legislative alteration on every route, and, indeed, on every article; and the consequence of that is that under certain circumstances of exigency—as in the recent extraordinary competition—the alterations are voluminous. It has been calculated that the United States alone, if this Return were made, would afford a small library. I cannot agree to the Motion. The fact is it would be fruitless, even if it were possible; because before these Returns could be printed the charges would have been, in all probability, altered and even greatly changed. Under these circumstances, I trust the noble Earl will not press his Motion.

THE EARL OF CORK AND ORRERY: After what the noble Earl has said, as my library is only a small one, I will not press the Motion.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

House adjourned at Seven o'clock,
till To-morrow, half past
Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 12*th February,* 1880.

MINUTES.] — PUBLIC BILLS—*Ordered—First Reading* — Medical Appointments Qualifications * [71]; Epping Forest Act (1878) (Continuance) * [73]; Indian Salaries and Allowances * [72].

Second Reading—Relief of Distress (Ireland) [1].

Second Reading—Referred to Select Committee—Bankruptcy Law Amendment [3]; Chartered Banks (Colonial) [4]; Medical Act (1858) Amendment (No. 3) * [67]; Medical Act (1858) Amendment (No. 2) * [37].

Committee—Report—Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement (Scotland) Act (1875) Amendment [5].

QUESTIONS.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS, UNREFORMED—REPORT OF ROYAL COMMISSION.

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he proposes to take action on the Report of the Municipal Corporations Commission?

MR. ASSHETON CROSS, in reply, said, that he had only had the Report in his hands a week before Parliament reassembled; and, therefore, he had not had time to study it with the evidence. The Commission had bestowed pains upon this inquiry; and, no doubt, their more material recommendations would deserve considerable attention.

PAROCHIAL CHARITIES—CITY OF LONDON—REPORT OF ROYAL COMMISSION.

MR. W. H. JAMES asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Why the Report of the Royal Commission on the Parochial Charities of the City of London has not been presented; and, if he can state when it will be presented?

MR. ASSHETON CROSS, in reply, said, that the reason why the Report referred to had not been presented was because it had not yet been received. It was expected that the Report would be received by the Home Office at the end of the present month, shortly after which it would be laid upon the Table.

CHARITY EXPENSES AND ACCOUNTS BILL.

MR. W. H. JAMES asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the Government intend to re-introduce the Charity Expenses and Accounts Bill of last Session; and, if not, what steps they intend to take to put into effect the assurance given last Session on the subject by the Government?

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON, in reply, said, that it was not the intention of the Government to re-introduce the Bill relating to Charity Expenses and Accounts, which he had laid upon the Table last Session, because the reception which that measure met with then was hardly encouraging. At present no decision had been come to with reference to any further steps being taken on the subject.

THE TORRES STRAITS ISLANDS.

MR. A. M'ARTHUR asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether he will inform the House what islands Her Majesty's Government have lately annexed in the Torres Straits, and what stipulations have been made with the Colony of Queensland for the due protection of the Native inhabitants; and, whether it is in contemplation to extend British jurisdiction to the neighbouring mainland of New Guinea?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: Sir, the boundaries of Queensland have, since the year 1872, comprised all islands within 60 miles of the mainland of that part of Australia. In 1878 the Queensland Government stated to Her Majesty's Government that if they had jurisdiction over certain small islets and reefs in Torres Straits beyond their existing boundaries, but quite distinct from New Guinea, they could take any steps necessary for the protection of the Natives against pearl-shell seekers or other persons resorting there. This request was complied with. The islets are described in *The Queensland Gazette* of July 19, 1879; and I believe that the necessary measures have been taken by the Queensland Government. There is no intention whatever of extending British jurisdiction over the mainland of New Guinea.

AFRICA (WEST COAST)—BOMBARDMENT OF ONITSHA.

MR. RICHARD asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether his attention has been called to a statement which appeared in the "Daily News" of 16th January, to the effect that Captain Easton, one of Her Majesty's Consuls, on returning from a visit to the Sultan of Nupé's dominions on the river Niger, had found that the natives of Onitsha, 200 miles from the mouth of the river, had been giving considerable trouble to the Europeans, whereupon he obtained the services of Her Majesty's ship "Pioneer," and bombarded the town and destroyed it; and, whether he can inform the House if this statement be correct; and, if so, whether British Consuls have authority to use Her Majesty's ships to bombard and destroy towns whenever the inhabitants are charged with giving trouble to Europeans?

MR. BOURKE: Sir, I have not seen the statement in *The Daily News;* but we have official information with respect to the circumstances to which it alludes. The statement that the town of Onitsha, some 200 miles up the Niger river, has been bombarded by Her Majesty's ship *Pioneer* is correct, and the following are the circumstances in which the bombardment took place:—British traders have been for some time past established at Onitsha; but in consequence of the outrages committed on their properties and persons by the Natives, for which no redress could be obtained from the Chiefs, the merchants determined to withdraw altogether from that station. When about to carry this determination into effect, the Chiefs and people refused to allow them to remove their goods, and plundered some of the stores. The traders thereupon appealed for protection to Mr. Easton, the acting British Consul at Fernando Po, who happened to be on his way down the Niger, and who laid the matter before the senior naval officer on the station, and the *Pioneer* gunboat was sent up the Niger for the protection of British interests. On arriving at Onitsha steps were taken to remove the British property, which was estimated at over £20,000 in value; but while arrangements were being made to embark the property, the sailors and others engaged in this work were attacked by the Natives, and in consequence of this unprovoked aggression the Commander attacked and burnt the town. In answer to the last part of the Question, I have to say British Consuls are not authorized to bombard and destroy towns whenever the inhabitants are charged with giving trouble to Europeans; but there are exceptional occasions when it is the duty of Commanders of Her Majesty's cruisers to act promptly upon their own judgment, and particularly in those cases where British lives and property are at stake. In the present case, the conduct of the Consular and naval officers has been approved.

MR. RICHARD: Will there be any objection to produce the Papers relating to this transaction?

MR. BOURKE: I do not suppose there will be; but I will give a formal answer to that Question, if the hon. Gentleman will ask me again on Monday.

ARMY (INDIA)—KIRWEE PRIZE MONEY.

SIR JOHN HAY asked the Under Secretary of State for India, If he will lay upon the Table Copies of all unpublished Correspondence on the subject of the Kirwee Booty, between officers interested in the Prize Grant and the India Department, subsequent to the presentation of the last Return of Papers relating to this matter, viz. No. 213, of 1876; and, of the Short-hand Notes of the Proceedings in the Vice-Chancellor's Court, including the Arguments of Counsel and Sir C. Hall's Judgment in the action "Kinloch *v.* The Secretary of State in Council," on the 4th November 1879?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: Sir, on the 28th of January, Mr. Kinloch applied to Vice Chancellor Hall to direct that he should be furnished with the documents bearing on the case which might be in the possession of the Secretary of State; but the Vice Chancellor refused to make the order on the ground that an appeal was pending against his decision. But I should be glad to confer with my hon. and gallant Friend about these Papers. We have at the India Office a copy of the recent Judgment, but not the arguments of counsel; but I hardly think these Papers of sufficient general interest to be printed at the public expense.

GREECE—BRIGANDAGE IN ACARNANIA.

Mr. J. R. YORKE asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether his attention has been called to a "Notice to British Subjects" recently issued by Her Majesty's Consul at Corfu, in the following terms:—

> "Notice to British Subjects.—The undersigned has just received from Her Majesty's Consul for the Morea a despatch informing him 'That the authorities in Acarnania consider it dangerous for sportsmen and others landing from yachts on that coast, as there are several brigand chiefs on the frontier who might form plans for their capture, especially if they remain many days on the same spot.' All British subjects therefore leaving Corfu on shooting expeditions are hereby cautioned, as the Greek Government, after giving this notice, will not be answerable for any ransom that the brigands might exact.—Her Majesty's Consulate, Corfu, 11th November 1879. Signed, R. Reade, H.M.'s Consul;"

and, whether the condition of Acarnania so described is exceptional, or may be taken as a fair specimen of the normal security for life and property which is enjoyed throughout the Hellenic Kingdom?

Mr. BOURKE: Sir, it is true that a notice to that effect was issued in November last by Her Majesty's Consul at Corfu. Her Majesty's Minister at Athens reported on the 27th of the same month that some cases of brigandage having occurred in Greece, a very stringent law for its repression, which had been enacted in 1871 for a period of four years, and which had then proved effective, had been a second time put into force for a period of eight months. In respect to the effect of that law on the population, I am not in a position to say more at the present moment.

TREATY OF WASHINGTON—CANADIAN AND NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERIES.

Mr. GOURLEY asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If the claim of the United States Government for 103,000 dollars for damages alleged to have been done by Newfoundland fishermen in Fortune Bay to the Massachusetts fishing fleet has been amicably arranged; what measures are being adopted for the purpose of abrogating or amending Clause 33 of the Treaty of Washington relative to the Canadian and Newfoundland inshore fisheries; and, whether steps are being taken for the purpose of ascertaining if the Proviso of the Convention of 1818, which admits American fishermen to enter British North American bays or harbours for the purpose of shelter, repairing damages, and purchase of wood and water, is intended to exclude them from going inshore to traffic, tranship, fish, purchase stores, mend nets, and hire seamen?

Mr. BOURKE: Sir, the claim of the United States Government for damages alleged to have been done by Newfoundland fishermen in Fortune Bay is still under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government. No measures are being adopted for the purpose of abrogating or amending Clause 33 of the Treaty of Washington. The extent of the fishing privileges accorded to the United States on the shores of Canada and Newfoundland is laid down in the Convention of 1818, and in the Treaty of Washington of 1871. Her Majesty's Government have not at present found it necessary to make any communication to the United States Government with the view of defining more precisely the exact interpretation of the language of those Treaties.

Mr. GOURLEY said, that on an early day he would call attention to the Convention of 1818 between this country and the United States relative to fisheries.

BRAZIL—CLAIMS OF BRITISH SUBJECTS.

MR. ANDERSON asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If the long pending claims of British subjects against Brazil, which on the 23rd of June last he said were on the eve of satisfactory arrangement, are yet arranged?

MR. BOURKE: Sir, last Session I said, in reply to the hon. Member, that the Commission to which these claims had been referred had made considerable progress, and that there was some hope that in a short time a satisfactory arrangement might be arrived at. Some delay in the negotiations has been occasioned by a change of Government in Brazil; but the present Government appears to be really anxious to come to a satisfactory arrangement. They have been furnished with a Report of the exact state of the claims of each country, and have expressed their desire to have the matter settled as speedily as possible. Her Majesty's Minister in Brazil trusts that before long he will be in a position to place before Her Majesty's Government the proposals of the Brazilian Government.

SHORT SERVICE AND RECRUITING IN THE ARMY.

SIR HENRY HAVELOCK asked the Secretary of State for War, When the Report of the War Office Special Committee upon Short Service and Recruiting, of which Lord Airey is Chairman, may be expected to be presented; and, whether he will lay that Report upon the Table of the House in sufficient time to allow of its being fully considered by Members before the discussion on the Army Estimates?

COLONEL STANLEY, in reply, said, the Report of the Committee, of which Lord Airey was Chairman, had not yet been received. The Committee were still considering their Report; and, although they had given the most assiduous attention to it, it had not been yet sent in to the authorities. It was necessary to take a Vote of the number of men before the Mutiny Bill was brought in, and he could not promise to postpone the Estimates indefinitely.

CHINA—DOMESTIC SERVITUDE AT HONG KONG.

MR. ANDERSON asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, If it be the fact that Sir John Smale, the Chief Justice of Hong Kong, has declared that a system of slavery has grown up there and has been tolerated under British rule, while contrary to British Law; and what steps Government has taken, or proposes taking, to deal with the evil?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: Sir, I learn from the Hong Kong Press that Sir John Smale has on two occasions made some remarks from the Bench on the existence and increase of a system of domestic servitude among the Chinese of Hong Kong which is contrary to the law of the Colony. I only learnt this from the newspapers, as the learned Chief Justice did not think it necessary to bring his remarks officially under my notice. He very properly stated his intention to punish severely any offences against the law that might be brought before him. I am quite satisfied that Mr. Pope Hennessy, the Governor of Hong Kong, will take any steps that may be required on the part of the Colonial Government, and I do not see that any action on our part is necessary. But, of course, I shall readily consider any suggestions that may be made to me on the subject.

MR. ANDERSON asked if the Government would not communicate with the Governor of Hong Kong on the subject?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I am expecting a despatch on the subject.

POOR REMOVAL—LEGISLATION.

MR. SYNAN asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether he intends to bring in a Bill this Session to carry out the Report of the Poor Removal Committee of last Session?

MR. SCLATER-BOOTH: Sir, a Bill is in preparation, and will certainly be introduced this Session, although I cannot name the day. It will deal—and, I hope, effectively deal—with the subject referred to—the Select Committee on Poor Removal in the last Session; but I cannot say that it will deal with it exactly in the mode recommended in the Report of that Committee.

DISTRESS (IRELAND)—PRESENTMENT SESSIONS — LOANS FOR SANITARY WORKS.

Colonel COLTHURST asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Whether the same facilities will be given to Boards of Guardians in Ireland to obtain loans for other than sanitary works as were given to Boards of Guardians in Lancashire during the cotton famine?

Mr. J. LOWTHER: Sir, the facilities given to the Boards of Guardians in Lancashire at the time referred to, so far as I can gather from the clauses of the Act of Parliament, consisted of the power to borrow money for the purpose of making roads and footpaths, and widening, deepening, and straightening sewers or brooks; and also for the drainage of common land. The hon. and gallant Gentleman is aware that the Government have issued a Notice enabling presentment sessions to be held for the purpose of carrying out works of that kind in Ireland; and, moreover, in addition to this, the Government has already offered liberal terms to Boards of Guardians enabling them to borrow for various purposes in their capacities as local sanitary authorities, and this at a lower rate of interest than is allowed in ordinary cases.

Mr. SHAW asked whether the deepening of rivers was included in the works that might be done by order of the presentment sessions?

Mr. J. LOWTHER: There is no reference to the deepening of rivers in the Notice; but the Proviso states that the Lord Lieutenant, with the consent of the Treasury, may add works for special objects.

FLOGGING IN THE ARMY.

Mr. OTWAY asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he proposes, either by provisions in the Army Discipline Bill, or by any other measure, to relieve British soldiers from punishment by flogging, and thus put Her Majesty's Army in this matter in the same position as the armies of other civilised powers?

Colonel STANLEY, in reply, said, it was proposed to bring in an Army Discipline and Regulation Act Continuance Bill, as was proposed last year.

LOCAL LOANS COMMITTEE.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, When he proposes to move for the Committee which he promised on the 11th August 1879,

> "To consider the subject of local loans generally, and to go into other matters bearing upon the subject, such as the granting greater facilities to local authorities for obtaining loans?"

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER, in reply, said, he intended to make the Motion shortly; but he had not been able to do it yet owing to the pressure of other Business.

ARMY—SECONDED OFFICERS.

General Sir GEORGE BALFOUR asked the Financial Secretary to the War Department, If he will lay upon the Table a List of all the appointments, duties, and employments which govern the seconding of officers under the Royal Warrant of February 1880, together with a numerical Return of the officers seconded for their several appointments, showing the ranks and corps?

Colonel LOYD LINDSAY: Every regimental officer is seconded, if he be not altogether removed from the regimental roll, on appointment to any extra regimental position as soon as he has held such position for three months.

TREATY OF BERLIN—ARTICLE 23—EUROPEAN TURKEY.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, For what Provinces of European Turkey Commissioners are appointed to give effect to the provisions of the 23rd Article of the Treaty of Berlin; and, if he can state how those Commissions are composed?

Mr. BOURKE: Sir, we have received Reports of such Commissions having been formed in the vilayets of Adrianople, Salonica, and Janina. In the vilayet of Adrianople the Commission is thus comprised — President, the Governor General; 12 representative members, of whom four are Greeks, three Mussulmans, two Armenians, one Bulgarian, one Jew; 11 *ex-officio* members, of whom nine are Mussulmans and two non-Mussulmans. This Commission has completed its examination and sent up its Report to Constantinople. The Commission for the vilayet of Salonica, as finally constituted, contains 10 Mussulmans, eight Christians, and two Jews. Of these 20 members, 17 are natives of Macedonia and three of Asia Minor. Of the proceedings in the vilayet of Janina we only know that the Vali has constituted a Commission. It consists of 20 Mussulmans and six or seven Greeks, and it is now examining the Organic Law proposed to be applied to the Province.

SOUTH AFRICA—THE PAPERS.

MR. COURTNEY asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, When the Papers relating to South Africa, promised in Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech, will be laid upon the Table of the House, and whether they will extend to cover the period of the arrests of Messrs. Kruger, Pretorius, and Bok; and, whether he can inform the House of the number of the forces of all arms now in the Transvaal, and will make a Return of the revenue and expenditure of the Government in the Transvaal from its annexation; also of the existing liabilities of the Government, showing how the deficiency of revenue to meet the expenditure has so far been supplied?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: Sir, I hope to place upon the Table tomorrow Papers relating to South African affairs up to the end of 1879, and that they will be in the hands of hon. Members by Wednesday next. Further Papers up to the date of the meeting of Parliament will be published about a week later, and among them will be found a despatch received last week announcing the arrest of Messrs. Pretorius and Bok. I have not heard that Mr. Krüger has been arrested. I believe that there are at present about 3,900 troops of all arms in the Transvaal; but, of course, it must not be implied from this that this force will be permanently retained there. I have not, at the present moment, any statement of the revenue and expenditure of the Transvaal Government up to a later date than the 31st of March, 1879; but I am anxious to give the House the fullest possible information upon the subject. The hon. Gentleman will remember that a great deal of information, up to a certain date, was supplied in the Report of Mr. Sergeaunt, which has already been published. I am informed, by telegram, that there are financial statements on their way to this country; and I hope, in a very short time, to give the House such information as will enable them to form an opinion both of the past and of the present condition as well as the future prospects of the Province with regard to finance. Perhaps I may say that the deficiency of revenue, which, of course, includes the interest on the heavy debt inherited from the late Government, has been supplied by the grant made by Parliament nearly three years ago, and by an overdraft on a local bank on the terms described in Mr. Sergeaunt's Report.

BOARD OF WORKS (IRELAND)—CONSOLIDATION ACTS.

MR. P. MARTIN asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If it is not the fact that there are at present some three hundred Acts on the Statute Book which relate to the duties assigned to the Board of Works in Ireland; whether it has been represented to the Treasury by the Departmental Committee appointed in 1877 that it was necessary for the due and prompt discharge of the statutory duties of the Board in respect to loans that the work of the consolidation and amendment of these statutes should be at once taken in hand; if so, what steps have been taken in respect to this and the other recommendations made by the Committee in June 1878 with regard to the reconstruction and reorganization of the Board of Works; and, if it is the intention of the Government, and, if so, when, to submit any Bill or Bills to the House to give effect to the recommendations, or any or which of them so made by the Committee?

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON: Sir, the Committee of Inquiry of 1877-8 reckoned the number of Acts relating to the Irish Board of Works at 300, and recommended that they should be consolidated. In accordance with this recommendation, the Treasury have employed Mr. Brougham Leech, of the Irish Bar, to prepare a scheme of consolidation, and he has now been engaged for more than a year on the task. A Bill has been prepared, and will shortly be introduced, for re-constructing the Board of Works and re-distributing its duties.

DISTRESS (IRELAND)—LONGFORD UNION.

MR. JUSTIN M'CARTHY asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Whether he can state the nature and source of the information on which the Irish Local Government Board acted when they declined to put Longford Union in the list of Scheduled Unions; and, whether there is any objection to produce the Report or Reports which affirmed that there was no exceptional distress in Longford Union?

MR. J. LOWTHER, in reply, said, that when an application was made by the Board of Guardians to have a Union included in the list of Scheduled Unions, it was referred by the Local Government Board to the Inspector of the district for his Report. On receiving that Report, the Local Government Board made a communication to the Irish Government, which then decided whether or not the Union should be added to the list of Scheduled Unions. In the case of the Longford Union, on the first application some time ago, the Report of the Inspector and the recommendation of the Local Government Board were unfavourable to its addition to the Schedule. The fact, however, of a Union having been in a position at one time which did not justify its being added to the Schedule was no reason why, later on, when circumstances rendered it desirable, it should not be so added. In regard to Longford Union, on the receipt of another application, the Inspector reported that the Union might with advantage be included in the Schedule, and it was now included accordingly. The Inspector's Reports were in many cases of a highly confidential nature, and it would be inexpedient to produce them.

WATER SUPPLY OF LONDON—LEGISLATION.

MR. FAWCETT asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If he can inform the House when the Bill relating to the Water Supply of London will be introduced?

MR. SCLATER-BOOTH: On behalf of my right hon. Friend (Mr. Assheton Cross), I beg to state that the Bill in question is in a forward state of preparation; but I am not at this moment in a position to say on what day it will be introduced.

PERSIA AND HERAT.

MR. W. HOLMS wished to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer a Question of which he had given him private Notice—namely, Whether there is any truth in the statement which appears in *The Daily News* of this morning that a Treaty has been signed, or is in course of negotiation, between England and Persia by which, among other stipulations, the latter Power is released from the obligation not to occupy Herat?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, no such Treaty has been signed. I can only repeat the statement which I made the other day in answer to the Question put by the noble Lord (the Marquess of Hartington), that it is impossible for me to make any further statement on the subject at this moment.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

THE ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

Order for Further Proceeding on Report of Address [11th February] read.

Further Proceeding on the said Report *resumed.*

RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND.)

MR. O'DONNELL said, in his reply to the charges brought against the Home Rule Party, he had found himself much embarrassed by the fact that certain Ministerial journals had devoted long articles to misrepresentations of his observations, while they had suppressed the report of those observations. Those journals had not only represented his proceedings as mere obstruction, but had also represented the proceedings of Home Rule Members in the discharge of their duty to their constituents as disgraceful proceedings, for the purpose of obstruction alone—and he begged most respectfully to protest against the exceptional privileges of the Gallery of that House, which put thousands in the pockets of those journals, being used to falsify the reports of that House. The Home Secretary had stated that the reason why the Government refused to give a single word of encouragement to the starving people down to the middle of November was because they were afraid that it would lead the Irish people to expect relief, and that the poor peasants would, in consequence, consume more rapidly their miserable stock of food. He (Mr. O'Donnell) did not think a statement more unconsciously brutal could be uttered; and he quite agreed with the most Rev. Dr. M'Cormack that the authors of any disturbance which might ensue were the Government of the day, who, charged with the duty of providing for the people, persisted in an attitude of silence and did not utter a single word of encouragement to a starving people. During that time the people were left to themselves, and then the hon. Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell) took the measures he did for the preservation of life and property in Ireland—for he contended that, looking to the experience of the scenes of bloodshed and disturbance which took place under a similar attitude of the Government in previous times, he could not but think that it was the manner in which the hon. Member for Meath taught the people to meet peacefully, and by constitutional organizations to bring their wretched condition to the notice of the public—it was to that action and that policy alone that the country had to be thankful for the total absence of crime which marked the whole period of agitation conducted by the hon. Member for Meath. He observed also with regret that the Government officials deserted their benches during the explanations of Irish Members, just as the Government organs suppressed the reports of their speeches. With regard to the condition of Cararoe, they had the authority of the Catholic priests of the district to prove that the population of that place were steeped in the utmost distress and destitute of both food and clothing. With one honourable exception the landlords were determined to evict, and it was in the midst of the sore need of this wretched population that a body of armed constabulary were sent to accompany the process-servers in order to eject 150 families from their miserable huts on the roadside. All the arms the poor creatures possessed were the arms of women and children, and the way in which they used them was to get in the way of the constabulary, clasping their knees, and tearing their own hair in their desperation. Those women and children were repulsed with the utmost brutality by the armed constabulary—not with the gentle hand which would be used by the London constable, but by striking the women with the butts of their heavy rifles and prodding them with the bayonets — a scene which would disgrace the reign of a Turkish Pasha in Bulgaria. Those scenes were the result of the policy of the Government, and not the result of the agitation of the hon. Member for Meath. He saw with regret that the hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Plunket), who was very bold in his assertions, had not courage to stop and see them challenged. The statements of the hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin had provoked a reply from the President of the Balla Branch of the National Land League in respect to the number of evictions which took place on the estate of Sir Robert Blosse, the number given being considerably more than was stated to be the case, and all the other allegations referred to in respect to Sir Robert Blosse were similarly contradicted. But what was a still more serious matter on the part of the hon. and learned Member for the Dublin University (Mr. Plunket) was his attack on the hon. Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell), whom he accused of having openly rejoiced over the misery of the people, because that misery would tend to advance the land movement. In the whole history of political animosity and rancour, was there ever such a charge brought by one man against another! It was as false as it was atrocious. The hon. Member for Meath was doing a good work thousands of miles away and could not defend himself; but his Colleagues, from their seats in that House, would, and that victoriously and easily. Before he went to America the hon. Member for Meath told the people of Ireland, in the darkest hour of their misery, not to despair, and that from the justice of their cause it must provoke the attention of the Legislature. The hon. Member for Meath had endeavoured to console the people by reminding them that the very extremity of their suffering must soon provoke a reform of their miserable condition ; and this, forsooth, was the pretext for the abominable accusation of the hon. and learned Member for Dublin University; this was the paltry and odious foundation for imputing to an illustrious patriot the vilest motives which could actuate the basest of demagogues. The hon. Member for Dungannon (Mr. Dickson) had similarly reminded the tenantry of Antrim that the evident breakdown of the land system must provoke reform. Nay, the great Tribune of the English people, the right hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright), had used similar language, and at the inauguration of the Cobden Memorial, a couple of years ago, had stated how, in the struggle for the repeal of the Corn Laws, the time came when the artificial dearness of the people's food at length produced its predicted results, that they had warred against the famine, and that now the famine had declared itself upon their side. The hon. Member for Meath went to America to obtain aid at the solicitations of the tenant farmers in Ireland, as a delegate of the National Land League in Ireland and of the Tenants' Defence Association. His was no private mission of personal ambition or personal agitation. He was the authorized ambassador of the tenant organizations of Ireland. Whether the charge came from Ministerial politicians, or from certain quarters in Ireland, the pretence that the hon. Member for Meath's visit to the United States was anything less than a public and national undertaking was utterly unfounded and misleading, and every attempt to weaken his authority or injure his influence in the American Republic was directed not only against him individually, but against the Tenant Association and League of which he was the President at home and the representative beyond the Atlantic. He (Mr. O'Donnell) and his Colleagues were in favour of fixity of tenure, which would before long secure the prosperity not only of the tenant but of the landlord; but they utterly denied that they were, in the reform of the Land Laws, seeking anything else but to benefit the numerous classes in Ireland. They said that in raising the status of the tenantry they were improving the position of the landlord, and they were all in favour of the creation of a peasant proprietary. Criticisms might be directed against this or that proposal; but it was utterly monstrous, on the ground of some difference of detail, to denounce the authors of schemes which had their parallels in so many of the Conservative States in Europe. In spite of the representations of Boards of Guardians and others, which placed beyond doubt that the Irish people were on the verge of starvation, the Government maintained a contemptuous silence; and then only the hon. Member for Meath told the people that if they were dealing with good landlords let them pay them to the best of their ability; but if they were bad landlords, and they demanded all that the tenants got and afterwards served them with ejectment writs, he told them to resist such action as far as was advisable. It had been falsely represented in some of the Government organs that it was an anti-rent agitation. On the contrary, it was purely an exceptional remedy, and they utterly repudiated the idea of urging the abolition of rent. Let rent be paid to the utmost, and with the utmost punctuality; but the duty a father owed to his famished children was far beyond that of a rent-contract. When the Government were appealed to in the matter they only answered in insulting mockery, and did not give one word of hope. At the Mansion House banquet Lord Beaconsfield, on the 9th of November last, denied that there was any serious distress in Ireland, and made the question of Irish distress the subject of some of his most elegant badinage and jest. The noble Lord, the Head of the Government, agreeably chaffed the Irish people for the amusement of the assembled guests of the Lord Mayor of London. The Irish were his "brilliant brethren," whose only misfortune was that they were not "logical" as well as brilliant. While Lord Beaconsfield was expending his after-dinner gibes at the Mansion House feast, his "brilliant brethren" were starving around fireless hearths in a hundred mountain valleys, were wasting in the slow agonies of hunger, while the head of the Government was making a mock of their misery amid the loaded dishes and flowing wines of the banquet at Guildhall. That was how the Government understood their duties to Ireland. The joyous speech of the Premier took place on the 9th of November. Within 10 days afterwards four of the most prominent friends of the people were arrested under a warrant from

Dublin Castle; and still the Government had not expended a single sixpence in relief. This was their policy, a policy of neglect and insult, of outrage and provocation. They seemed to have calculated on driving the people to despair; and but for the calm counsels of the hon. Member for Meath, who used the authority which he held from the affection and confidence of the people in order to lead them safely through the provocations of the Government, who knew but that the calculations of the Government might have succeeded? He (Mr. O'Donnell) had now abundantly proved the character of the Government policy towards the distress in Ireland. He would next meet the misrepresentations of the Ministerial orators on the subject of Irish self-government. The claim for Home Rule in Ireland was perfectly constitutional, and it was a deliberate slander to assert that it implied the disintegration of the Empire. On the contrary, it was the policy of the Ministry which was disintegrating the Empire, by setting nation against nation, and sacrificing the friendly co-operation of the British and Irish peoples to the detestable suggestions of a factious electioneering. Home Rule meant national legislation for national concerns, and Imperial legislation for common Imperial affairs. The men who pretended to misunderstand Home Rule had plenty of examples of the success of Home Rule systems before their eyes. He would not refer merely to the self-governing Colonies of Britain. What was the great German Empire but a complete example of a strictly Home Rule Constitution? Bavaria, Saxony, Baden, Wurtemberg, Prussia, all had their Home Rule Parliaments. Did that prevent the Imperial Parliament of Germany from being a true Imperial Parliament? If Lord Beaconsfield thought that Home Rule meant weakness and disintegration, let him venture to act on such a supposition in his dealings with Prince Bismarck. Jingo Imperialism would, however, take good care to avoid such a test, and none knew better than the Tory Premier that it was German Home Rule which made German unity so formidable and so strong. In the vast Republic of the United States we had again a strictly Home Rule Constitution, which conduced, as no other Constitution could, to the power and majesty of that more than Imperial Commonwealth. Lord Beaconsfield had a soul above national distinctions. This Imperial leveller had no ideal of Government beyond a servile horde of the subjects crouching beneath the irresponsible supremacy of the State. A Byzantine Cæsarism or an Oriental Sultanate were the models of his predilections to which he appeared to be drawn by his very nature and genius. He had no sympathy with the ordered freedom of European civilization. No responsive chord within him answered to the instinct of home and native land. The strong ties of birthplace and national tradition were undervalued and unexperienced. He apparently could not conceive that anything could be wanting in a State than somebody at the top who should rule and a multitude at the bottom who should be ruled. He (Mr. O'Donnell) found a great difficulty in taking account of such ideas and such a system as seemed to be embodied in the political theories and practice of the present Chief of the Ministry. He could understand them at Constantinople or Bagdad; but how came they here? They would have nothing foreign or unnatural among Turks or Moors; but they were at once repulsive and ridiculous in the midst of the free traditions of the West. If some cosmopolitan refugee, some flotsam and jetsam of historical revolutions, had been cast upon our shores, as he might have been cast upon the shores of Tunis or Tripoli; if some being without a country or a home had become domiciled by some freak of fortune amongst us; if some creature of abject arts and tortuous ability had flattered, and intrigued, and finessed his way to power among us, as some pipe-bearer or slipper-bearer might flatter, and intrigue, and finesse his way to the post of favourite or Vizier in some Eastern despotism—he could indeed comprehend, he could indeed frame to himself some explanation of the growth and propagation of servile and astounding ideas more fit for the Courts of a Bajazet or an Amurath than for the least free of Western Kingdoms. He could understand that such a stranger and interloper, however dexterous, would be unable to practise a liberty which neither he nor his had ever known by any natural title; that, satisfied with the position which he had succeeded in acquiring, he would be unable even to conceive how other men could be moved by a less ignoble ambition; and having himself arrived at the summit of the State without patriotism, consistency, or nationality, he would naturally despise as weakness and folly the influence of national and patriotic sentiments among the peoples whom he had so subtly secured the power to insult, to outrage, and to oppress. To be the master, no matter by what means, of a vast Empire; to see his outlandish name accompanying or preceding that of the Sovereign in magniloquent decrees and Imperial proclamations; to set in motion, as from the operator's chamber of a puppet-show, the cranks and wires which pulled and directed the mechanical regularity of a blind and organized majority, would, doubtless, to such as he (Mr. O'Donnell) had supposed, be the perfection of Constitutional order, as it would assuredly be the utmost gratification of personal inclinations. This transplanted Vizier would not be able always to contain the scorn which vulgar honesty and an unfelt patriotism excited in his fine Orientalism. On occasion even he would voluntarily confess, unconscious of the degradation of the avowal, that the art of government was only one of the arts of self-advancement; and he would rule and be proud to uphold his rule by the same tricks of show and petty dealing by which at some former epoch of his vagrant family history his ancestors had passed off dubious silks of Egypt on the dames of Venice, or extolled to voluptuous Signori the fine points of contraband slave-girls from the Levant. Irishmen declined to be led away from their national traditions. They declined to accept the cosmopolitan example of an Imperial Bohemian. They did not respect, far less could they follow, the policy of Lord Beaconsfield. That policy was not respected, however it might be utilized, in the ranks of the Conservative Party itself. Ask any Member of the Conservative Party, and he would say that Lord Beaconsfield was clever, was able to dish the Whigs, and always was ready with some sly move, and always able to out-manœuvre the other side. Lord Beaconsfield was a great electioneering agent—he was no Premier of England. His rule might yet last some time longer, and, speaking as a Member of an advanced section of Irish politicians, he looked without the slightest dismay upon the prospect of another seven years of Tory rule. Another such lease of power would consolidate the forces of the Irish popular Party, and it would make them certain of their triumph at some future day. The Members of the front Opposition Bench were often found playing the game of the Government, as was shown by the goody-goody speeches of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster), and others, who, upon the faith of the bigoted Tory writer who was the Dublin Correspondent of *The Times,* had retailed to English constituencies during the Recess every infamous fable invented against the hon. Member for Meath. These silly Liberals had blindly done their best to discredit the Irish Party and the darling Leader of the Irish people; and now they were discovering, at Liverpool and elsewhere, that they had only been doing the work of the Tories. This great electioneering confederacy, at the head of which Lord Beaconsfield was, had not a single scruple in the attainment of its ends. He impeached them as a Government without political honour, reckless of the peace of the country, and prepared to stick to place by any means, however nefarious. They were the Party of public intoxication, the Party of bigotry and national discord. There motto was "Place! place! place!" That was their conscience. The true translation of *Imperium et libertas* had not yet been given, just as the quotation itself was not to be found in any classical author. It meant "Place by any means!" That was a free translation; but he denied that the most learned pundit of the British Museum could find a truer translation of the principle which ruled the policy of the Government. In conclusion, the hon. Member moved the Amendment of which he had given Notice, declaring that every word which it contained was true.

Mr. BIGGAR, in seconding the Amendment, said, he should not detain the House long, as he had a prior engagement to address the Irish electors of a Metropolitan borough. He complained that the statements of Irish Members had been replied to by English Members who knew nothing of the facts, and who had, therefore, based unsound arguments on insecure foundations. The London morning papers had charged the Irish Members with obstruction; but those

Members had acted entirely within their province and in the discharge of their duty to the Irish people, who would have been very dissatisfied if their Members had not brought their grievances before the House of Commons. He said this, in order to show the difficult position in which the Irish Members were placed. He did not himself care for the English papers; but they were used for the very unfair purpose of setting a very stupid class of half-hearted and unprincipled section of the Liberal Party against the Irish Members. The Irish Members did not appeal at all to the public opinion of the English morning papers; but they appealed to the public opinion of the Irish people, and they were thoroughly content if they satisfied their own constituencies. He thought his hon. Friend the Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell) had made out a wonderfully strong case. When the South Africa Bill was before the House the opposition to it was called obstruction, and the House now saw what had been the result of the tyrannical manner in which the Bill was forced through. His hon. Friend was undoubtedly right in his references to the land agitation. The Irish Members had never charged all the Irish landlords with being bad landlords. The hon. and gallant Member for Sligo (Colonel King-Harman) had been pointed out as one of the best of landlords, and he (Mr. Biggar) would say that if all the landlords of Ireland were equal to the best there would be no land agitation. But many of the landlords were bad ones, and in some parts of Ireland the tenants were actually paying four times the amount of the valuation. The result was that, in bad times, the unfortunate tenants of bad landlords had no reserve, and must either pay his exorbitant rent or be turned out. If unable to pay his rent, a tenant had no claim for compensation under the Land Act. He had heard of a case in which a tenant had sunk £1,000 in improvements, and was now unable to pay his rent, and he was told that the landlord was going to turn the man out without any compensation for his improvements. He (Mr. Biggar) contended that no landlord ought to have the power to turn a tenant out without compensation, and that the State should say that nothing more than a fair and reasonable rent should be paid, and that an attempt should be made to establish what was called a peasant proprietary. That was the programme for which his hon. Friend the Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell) contended. It had never been pretended that the vested interests of the landlord should be taken away from him without full and fair compensation. The Government had prosecuted three or four friends of his for having recommended the clearing away of the landlords; but they advocated the clearing away of the landlords with compensation. That was no offence against morals, and it ought not to be one against law. The result of the present system was that the people were driven into the mountains, and that the good land was being used in the most wasteful manner for grazing. If it were used for the raising of crops, the production of the country would be increased, and all the interests of the country would be improved. But the rights of property were considered to be more valuable than the rights of the community. With regard to the distress, he believed that the average land of Ireland was worth literally nothing last year. He held that the landlord who asked a tenant to pay an unfair rent was more to blame than the unfortunate tenant who refused to pay it.

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the Address, to add the words "We humbly represent to Your Majesty that, while wasting the resources and straining the honour of the State in unjust aggressions abroad, the Ministry have endangered the peace and neglected the interests of the Country at home:

"That when the attention of Your Majesty's advisers was called during last Parliament to the approaching distress in Ireland, they only replied with insulting mockery, and that when the distress deepened, and the inhabitants of the afflicted districts sought to move public opinion by peaceable meetings, the Government adopted an attitude of provocation, and answered the Petitions of the starving cultivators by arbitrary arrests and displays of military force:

"That the Ministry seek to stir up evil passions and prejudices between the English and Irish peoples:

"That they sedulously describe as seditious and disloyal the Constitutional endeavours of the Irish representatives to establish improved relations between Ireland and the other portions of Your Majesty's Dominions and to bring about a better distribution of the legislative work which now overburthens the Imperial Parliament:

"That when any English Party or English politicians seek to promote the removal of Irish grievances, they are denounced by the present Ministry to the prejudices of the unthinking and unreflecting as the bad patriots and enemies of England, and that there can no longer be a doubt that this policy has been adopted for the purpose of obtaining a factious and calamitous success at the approaching General Elections:

"And that, therefore, in face of such misconduct, we have no alternative but to beseech Your Majesty to dismiss from Your Councils Your present advisers, in order to prevent the further practice of abuses more dangerous than open treason to the State."—(*Mr. O'Donnell.*)

Mr. FINIGAN said, he should briefly go through the several points of the Amendment. He contended that Her Majesty's Government had, as his hon. Friend alleged, disturbed the peace, not only of this country, but of Europe, by their foreign policy. By rejecting the Berlin Memorandum they had separated England from the Councils of the other European Powers, and had thus led to the Russo-Turkish War; and as long as they pursued their present policy of threatening Russia they would render it impossible for Russia to disarm. While Russia remained armed Germany would not disarm, and the armaments of Germany involved the armaments of France. Thus the Government prevented the disarmament of the European Powers. He believed it was too late to convert the Government to a peace policy; but he hoped the Opposition would take warning, and turn their attention to questions at home. The paragraph in the Amendment relative to the Irish distress was warranted by the facts. He complained that the Government, although very early warned last year by Irish Members of the calamity which then threatened the South and West of their country, had turned a deaf ear to all such appeals. They never did anything for Ireland until they were shamed into it by the public opinion, not only of this Kingdom, but of Europe and the world. He doubted whether they would have moved to save the perishing peasantry unless they had been compelled by that very strong and just public opinion. From the speech of the Home Secretary, it would appear still to be the intention of the Government only to do so much for the starving people as would keep them from the grave, forgetting that the want of proper clothing and other comforts would engender disease among large numbers, while others would be obliged to fly to this country, where they would increase the competition in an already over-stocked labour market. Instead of having another exodus of the poor peasantry from Ireland, it was time that they had an exodus of landlords. It would be a good thing both for Ireland and for England if the House could frame and pass such a measure as would give an equitable compensation to the landlords, and the lands were handed over to the tillers of the soil for the creation of a peasant proprietary. Instead of offering to Ireland some beneficial measure, Her Majesty's Government, as the distress deepened and the people peaceably assembled to agitate their grievances, proceeded to put into force the old policy of police and bailiffs which it was hoped had long ago been abandoned. At the meeting held in Dublin on the 24th of November, those called Irish agitators had used language such as was to be found in the writings of no less a political economist than John Stuart Mill, and yet they found the Government stepping in and menacing the right of public meeting and free speech by a display of military force. He had been informed, though he was open to subsequent correction, that the officer in charge of the constabulary on that occasion had private orders to shoot the illustrious Member for Meath in case any disturbance arose. He had no doubt this might sound very pleasant to some Tory Gentlemen; but if this were the policy which Her Majesty's Government approved, it was time to bid adieu to all hope of a pacific understanding between Ireland and England. He took it that on the part of men who professed anxiety that the Empire should be cemented by the ties of equality and justice such a policy met with their reprobation and condemnation. It was stated in the 3rd paragraph of the Amendment that the Ministry sought to stir up evil passions and prejudices between the English and Irish peoples, and having recently been in Liverpool he must say that the supporters of the Government used every ignoble and vile device which it was in the ingenuity of man to conceive to stir up ill-will and prejudice between the people of that town. Was it worthy of the Party who professed to govern the country in the interests of the Empire that they should renew that spirit which formerly reigned to the detriment of England and Ireland, and which everybody thought had been buried by the Catholic Emancipation Act? As an Irish Representative, it was immaterial to him at what altar a man might kneel so long as he found him on the platform of common humanity. So long as he found a man endeavouring to do justice to Ireland without injustice to England, so long was he ready to grasp his hand and strike with him in a battle for their common humanity. He hoped the Liberal Party would expose the ignoble policy of the Government, and lay a nobler policy before the country. The Government stood condemned before the country for their foreign policy, and they stood condemned in the eyes of all thinking men by their policy on the present question, by which they fostered bigotry and prejudice among the people and were really severing the links which united the Irish people to the Constitution in a spirit of loyalty. With respect to the last paragraph of the Amendment, he had no doubt that in a short time the present Advisers of Her Majesty would be dismissed; and when the claims of Ireland were laid before 60 or 70 English constituencies, he felt sure that neither the chicanery of the Tory Party nor the weakness of the Liberal Party would induce them to disregard those claims.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 12; Noes 128: Majority 116.—(Div. List, No. 4.)

Address *agreed to*:—To be presented by Privy Councillors.

SUPPLY.

Resolved, That this House will, To-morrow, resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Resolved, That this House will, To-morrow, resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND) BILL.

(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. James Lowther, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.*)

[BILL 1.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

MR. SYNAN, in rising to move his Amendment, said, he was sorry to interpose himself between the House and the second reading of the Bill, and delay its progress for an hour or two, and it was probable that the motives of his Colleagues and himself would be misunderstood and misrepresented in that House and out of it, as their motives had been misrepresented by some of the public newspapers of the country as to the Amendment to the Address moved by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw). He did not expect that their conduct and their actions, as the Irish independent Party in this House, would be ascribed by the public Press to any high motive of duty; but he had to ask the House not to be parties to such a misunderstanding. He hoped their arguments on this Bill and on the Resolution he had to propose would receive consideration from the Government. The Bill before the House dealing with Irish distress proposed as a measure for relief to lend out money to different parties as well as to different individuals, so as to give employment to the distressed poor of Ireland. It proposed, in the first instance, to give those loans to Guardians of the poor for the purpose of relief, and it proposed to pay those loans by a mortgage on the rates; secondly, it proposed to give similar loans to the sanitary authorities for executing works; but it proposed, thirdly, to give loans under peculiar circumstances to the landlords for the purpose of employing the labourers on their estates to improve their property. To those provisions he had no personal objection. Then the baronial presentment sessions were also to execute works and to charge the rates with the re-payment of those loans. He was not so much in favour of the latter proposal as he was of the others. It was a proposal fraught with great danger. The experience of 36 years ago, which he was old enough to remember, was not very encouraging as to the character of those works or as to the effect they would have. It would require great caution, and prudence, and limitation to make them useful, for they might throw away money in useless works as they did before. He must also qualify his approval of lending money to landlords, because the money lent for them to improve their estates would probably, in some instances, be employed to raise their rents. The money should be lent also to the tenants for the improvement of their farms under the supervision of the Board of Works, and which improvement would do much to prevent future famines. His Amendment called the attention of the House to the 17th clause of the Bill, which said that all the loans to be given to the sanitary authorities were to be with the consent of the Irish Local Government Board. The landlords were to have the loans by the sanction of the Board of Works; and whereas the Commissioners of Works had advanced money to the landowners, the 17th clause threw the whole cost of the relief on the Irish Church Fund, and thus relieved the English Treasury. The rate of interest under the Bill was to be 1 per cent, and the rate of borrowing money, under ordinary circumstances, was from 4 to 5½ per cent. The only difference was the rate of interest; and instead of throwing that low interest on the Consolidated Fund, it threw it on to the Irish Church Fund. The possible loss would fall on the Irish Church Fund instead of on the Imperial Fund. Therefore, they thought that they were bound to bring this matter before the House. He should move—

> "That it is inexpedient that any portion of the property accruing to the Commissioners of the Church Temporalities Fund under 'The Irish Church Act, 1869,' shall be applied towards the relief of the distress in Ireland, and that the provisions of the Bill authorizing such advances out of such property cannot be satisfactory, and this House is of opinion that all advances to be made for the purpose of relieving distress in Ireland shall be made from Imperial resources."

It could not be denied that, if there were no Irish Church Fund, the loans would have to come out of the Imperial Fund. Now, what was the Irish Church Surplus Fund; under what circumstances did it arise? Was it intended to be applied in loans to landlords, or to Boards of Guardians, or to the sanitary authorities? It was the surplus of a fund which was national, and which belonged to the poor. The tithes of the Church were the property of the people; and if the Church was disestablished and disendowed, the funds naturally reverted to the people, to whom they belonged, and to be employed for their purposes. Why, then, should this Fund be taken to save the Imperial Exchequer and allow the Chancellor of the Exchequer to patch up his Budget? This Bill violated the 68th clause of the Irish Church Act. It was to relieve the National Treasury of this country in meeting the great calamity which had fallen on a portion of this great Empire, and which ought to be dealt with by the Imperial funds. He denied that the spirit of the Act had been violated in drawing upon the fund for Intermediate Education and to provide pensions for teachers, because in these cases other funds were not applicable; and Parliament was not bound to draw upon the Imperial Exchequer for these purposes, which were of special interest to all Ireland. Although these two applications did not actually follow the words of the section, they were a *cy pres* and an equitable application of the Fund. There were national purposes for which it was desirable to retain the Church Fund. As the churches and residences handed over to the Disestablished Church were valued at £3,000,000 or £4,000,000, it was once proposed, and it might be again, to use the Fund in building residences and churches for the ministers and people of other denominations. But there was another and more paramount application of the money, a purpose for which the Government ought to maintain the Fund. There were many who thought a great experiment should be tried in the way of attempting to establish a peasant proprietary. The objection urged against such a scheme was that the Government would not get their rent-charges. Let the experiment be made to see if peasant proprietors would pay the rent-charges, and if it was successful the Government would be able to carry it out on a larger scale. On the other hand, if the experiment he suggested should be tried, the Irish people would bear the loss for the sake of such an experiment. The Government, if they chose, could force them to pass the Bill in its present form; but he maintained that the Irish people would be unanimously in favour of the application of the Fund in the manner he he had referred to, and it should be adopted for the solving of the Irish Land Question. He thought if there was a statesman in this country who was thoroughly acquainted with the state of things in Ireland and of the opinions of the Irish people, he would see the necessity of this sacred right being adopted for the purpose of settling the question. He was sorry to say that it had been looked upon by the Government as a delusion and a mockery, and that it was proposed in Ireland by agitators for their own purpose; but he was satisfied that the establishment of a peasant proprietary in Ireland would be a most conservative power, and would have the effect of doing away with many difficulties, and be the means of removing the discord and the hostility to the Government which at present existed. Seventeen years ago a great calamity fell upon this country. They all, no doubt, remembered the Lancashire Cotton Famine in the year 1863, and admired the way the people then bore the calamity. The Government, upon that occasion, brought in a Bill in order that an advance might be made out of the Public Treasury of the country to the extent of £1,200,000 to give loans to the local bodies, Boards of Guardians, and other representative bodies, for the purpose of forming a special fund, providing that money should be supplied for useful works, and that the money should be paid back at £3 10*s*. per cent. The Bill provided 30 years for the re-payment, with power to the Government to prolong the payment. The calamity in Ireland, however, was far greater than that of Lancashire, for the reason that it had fallen upon poor people who could not help themselves. In Lancashire the famine fell upon a rich country, where there were plenty of wealthy men to come forward; but in Ireland, unfortunately, they were driven to seek public charity from Europe and Australia and America. Considering the pauperized state of the country, he thought it would look well for the Treasury of England to advance a sum of money by way of loan, or otherwise, in order to relieve the terrible distress in Ireland. Were the present Government willing to let it go forth that, while they were ready to give millions to save Turkey, South Africa, and Afghanistan, they would refuse to give a shilling to Ireland, though it would save millions of starving people? If the sentiment of the House was what it ought to be, the great object all hon. Members should have in view was contained in his Amendment, and its adoption would lead to the conciliation of Ireland. It was in this spirit he proposed the Amendment, and in this spirit he hoped it would be received. Such a measure would act as a means of binding the two nations together; and he hoped that if it were accepted it would have the effect of binding the hearts of the Irish people to the English people with "hooks of steel." In conclusion, he begged to move the Amendment of which he had given Notice.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "it is inexpedient that any portion of the property accruing to the Commissioners of Church Temporalities under 'The Irish Church Act, 1869,' shall be applied towards the temporary relief of distress in Ireland, and that the provisions of the Bill authorising such advances out of such property cannot be satisfactory; and this House is of opinion that all advances to be made for the purpose of relieving distress in Ireland shall be made from Imperial resources,"—(*Mr. Synan,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY remarked, that while the main question before them was the necessity of giving adequate relief, the source from which the money was to be taken was a very important consideration. So far as he understood, the proposal of the Government was that a sum of £500,000 should be advanced for several purposes. Advances to landlords for purposes of improvement, advances to Boards of Guardians for sanitary purposes, advances to baronial sessions, the making and improving of roads, and, finally, what might turn out to be the largest and most important item of all—for the purposes of out-door relief. It was proposed that the greater proportion of this sum should be advanced at 1 per cent; and, so far as he understood, the portion to be advanced for purposes of out-door relief was to be at a larger rate of interest. The re-payment of the money was to be guaranteed by the various parties to whom it was advanced at certain rates of interest; but, so far as he understood, where the rate of interest payable was less than 3½ per cent, the difference was to be recouped from the Irish Church Fund. That would involve a charge on the Fund of some

£12,700 a-year, which would seriously retard the payment by the Commissioners of the Irish Church Temporalities of the debt which they owed to the Treasury, and would delay the time at which the Fund could really be turned to account and made available for such purposes as Parliament might think fit to apply it to. The security for the principal money advanced would be security on land and security on sanitary rates and poor rates. There was no fear whatever as to the payment of the principal fund to be advanced; and in these circumstances, and 1 per cent being perfectly secure, he should like to know whether it was unfair on their part to ask that the difference between 1 per cent and 3¾ per cent should be borne by the Imperial Treasury? Was it fair to throw a charge of £12,700 a-year on the Irish Church Fund? It might be said that this looked a very small sum to make any complaint about. It was certainly a small sum, coming from the Imperial Exchequer; but it represented a very large sum indeed, when thrown on the annual income which came into the hands of the Irish Church Temporalities Commission. The Irish Church Fund had been so completely excluded by the Act of 1869 from any operation of the kind, that the Government could not have sufficiently regarded it in making their present proposal. He did not think there was anything in connection with advances already made from the Fund which formed anything like a precedent for, or analogy to, the attempt now made to make use of the Fund for the purpose of relief. Out-door relief to a deplorable extent would have to be met and dealt with during the next two or three months; but they had not yet an adequate idea of the amount of suffering which would have to be faced, or of the suddenness with which it might come. It was only by endeavouring to recall what occurred in 1847 that they could form an adequate idea of the suddenness with which relief might be rendered imperative and necessary. Was there an existing organization, or was there a prospect of being called into existence any organization which would cope with that distress in the various localities over the Island? Had practical steps been taken, had adequate provision been made, to guard against loss of life? He thought not. Taking into consideration the bad seasons which Ireland had encountered, the absence of seed for next year, and the complete destitution which existed in many places, it was not too much to ask that there should be something in the shape of a grant to meet the expenditure for out-door relief. If it were necessary that out-door relief should be given in money, he should certainly make such a proposal with great diffidence. But if it were considered that it might be unsafe to give money for such relief on the broad lines which must be acted on in this case there was another way of giving it, and that was by the distribution of fuel and food. But they could not distribute food and fuel adequately and in time amongst the people unless they prepared an organization beforehand; and, therefore, he hoped that in the course of the progress of the Bill such Amendments would be introduced as would tend to the formation of an organization for the distribution of food and fuel in every district which was likely to be the scene of distress and suffering. When such organizations were formed he believed they would be able to economize the money to be expended, and considerably lessen the amount which it would be necessary or fair to accept as a grant from the Imperial Treasury. There was one other point to which he might allude without saying one word against baronial sessions. He trusted that certain Unions and Boards of Guardians would have facilities for giving labour similar to those proposed to be given to such sessions when it was necessary. There were many Unions not scheduled under the Act which were still in great distress. Where organization was necessary, and where it did not exist, the people would fall a prey to famine during the coming months. Something must be done beyond the ordinary scope and operation of the Poor Law, otherwise misery would come upon men, women, and children with this additional horror—that whereas in other quarters it had given premonitory symptoms and gradually increased in force, in these parishes and localities it would not come with such symptoms, but suddenly. Everything would be left to the ordinary remedy of the Poor Law, and in those districts famine would do its work.

COLONEL COLTHURST thought that, in the present emergency, it would be at least necessary for the Local Government Board to issue a Circular calling upon Boards of Guardians to give outdoor relief, and stating that the able-bodied had a right either to work or to such relief. This was done in Lancashire in 1863. Boards of Guardians, too, should have power to give relief in money as well as in fuel. He would leave it to their discretion; but he would also authorize them to exact work. As to the mode of re-payment, the Bill provided that the money was to be borrowed for 10 years at 3½ per cent interest. That, after all, was only staving off the evil day, and the Boards of Guardians would have before them the prospect that the rates in 10 years would have to bear a burthen amounting to 7*s*., 8*s*., or 10*s*. extra in the pound. How was a similar case met in Lancashire? The Boards were authorized that whenever the rates exceeded 5*s*. in the pound a rate in aid should be struck in the rest of the country not affected by the famine. In addition to that, power was given to Boards of Guardians in Lancashire to undertake works other than sanitary works, to deepen rivers, to improve ports, to widen roads, and so on—why should not similar power be given in Ireland? There would be another advantage in thus using the Boards of Guardians, and that was that it would do away at once with the cumbrous and inadequate procedure of baronial sessions. He hoped the Government would favourably consider the suggestions he had indicated. If they did so they might confidently answer the critics who feared, which he did not, that the presentment sessions would be extravagant, for then they would be for all practical purposes non-existent.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, there was a great deal of practical wisdom in what had been said by the hon. and gallant Gentleman who had just sat down. The Government derived great advantage from many of the observations which had been made in the course of the last few days by hon. Gentlemen who were acquainted with the real state of affairs in Ireland. The Government were anxious, as far as possible, to avail themselves of that experience; and he hoped that in the discussions in Committee they would have the advantage of it. With regard to one or two of the questions raised by the hon. and gallant Member, he did not think that the cases of Lancashire and of Ireland were exactly parallel; in fact, there were several points of divergence, which made it impossible for the Government to follow the precise course that was taken in the case of Lancashire. In that case there was no public money voted, though a considerable extension was given to the Poor Law system; but he agreed with the hon. and gallant Gentleman in what he said about special works. They should be very careful that there would be no indiscriminate or careless application of money which was intended to give employment to the poor, and to keep the people from starvation; and they should see that it would not be available possibly—to use a common phrase—for jobbing. With the deepest attention and the most earnest application, the Government in 1846-7 fell into great errors, and undertook a task which was beyond the power of any Government properly to fulfil. They got into a position in which they had many hundreds of thousands of persons employed on public works which were of no use whatever; the work was not performed with any energy or zeal, and kept people away from what was much more useful. It had been with reluctance and some apprehension that the Government had gone into the question of baronial sessions. They felt it was just one of those matters on which it was necessary to keep a vigilant eye. At the same time, they thought it better to err on the side of giving rather too much than too little; and they believed on the whole that, subject to proper restrictions and control, and to the inspection of the Government, the works of the kind baronial sessions were likely to present might be profitably undertaken. The works would be not only those mentioned in the Bill—namely, road making and improving; but would include operations such as the deepening of rivers, the construction of railways, and so forth. The hon. and gallant Member would see that the advantage of committing those works to the baronial sessions was that they could borrow money for such purposes as roads, and other works that the Lord Lieutenant, with the consent of the Treasury, might direct. He might mention that he had that day authorized the Irish Government to undertake, besides roads, other works that might seem desirable; and he trusted that that course would meet the wishes of the hon. and gallant Gentleman. It might be necessary, perhaps, not only to authorize, but also to press the Boards of Guardians to use their powers. For some time past, it had been the desire of the Government, wherever the Boards wished to extend the assistance given, to offer them facilities for doing so; but, undoubtedly, they might have to put some pressure on them to do their duty. Of course, the immediate responsibility rested with the Boards of Guardians. A system of poor relief was established in Ireland; and it was the duty of the Boards, if they found that the law did not permit them to do it, to come to the Government for additional assistance. Undoubtedly, the effect of their doing so would be to add to the charges of the Union; and it was just possible there might be cases in which the Guardians, having too great a desire to spare the rates, might be too slack in coming forward for the relief of exceptional distress. The Government had had that point before them, and they had desired the Local Government Board strongly to impress on Boards of Guardians the responsibility which was imposed upon them. In addition to the three Inspectors, of whose appointment notice had already been given, the Government had authorized, yesterday or to-day, the appointment of three additional Inspectors; and they had impressed on the Local Government Board the importance of causing those Inspectors to be as much as possible in their districts, in order to see what was really going on, and to report every case of distress or destitution which seemed to call for remark, and to exercise their influence in inducing Boards of Guardians to do their duty. In two or three cases the Local Government Board had offered to Boards of Guardians advances by way of loan, to enable them to procure fuel for distribution; but those offers had been declined. Of course, the responsibility of declining those offers rested on the Boards of Guardians; but he thought some power should be vested in the Inspectors and the Local Government Board to compel action even if the Boards of Guardians were slow to proceed. All these points had been and were continually under the notice of Her Majesty's Government, and they had been in constant communication with the Irish Government on the subject. He could assure hon. Gentlemen that they would continue earnestly to press these matters. By the Amendment, a question was raised as to whether any portion of the property accruing to the Commissioners of the Church Temporalities should be applied to the temporary relief of distress in Ireland; and the House was invited to express an opinion that all advances made for the purpose of relieving distress in Ireland should be made from Imperial resources. It was a very popular thing to say that all advances should come out of the Imperial Exchequer; but it must be borne in mind that, though there was very severe distress in parts of Ireland, there was also a good deal of distress in England. The Exchequer was supplied by contributions from all parts of the United Kingdom; and there might be, and, in fact, had been, a great many applications which the Government had felt it their duty to decline from distressed persons in England, and he thought from Scotland also, for assistance from the Exchequer. They had felt that it was impossible to attend to those applications with justice to the country at large. They desired to continue in a fair and liberal way the assistance by way of advances which was given to the improvement of land, and to various other purposes which were of national and general importance. They had established a system which had been carefully elaborated for making advances on terms which would involve no loss to the Exchequer, and which yet would be of advantage to the localities to which they were advanced. They were always met, even by gentlemen who in public matters were of a very economical turn of mind, with great objections to the stinginess or illiberality of the terms on which these advances were offered, and it was with the greatest difficulty that the Government were able to maintain the system which they were satisfied was necessary for the protection of the interests of the general public. If they were, in the case of exceptional distress in a portion of the United Kingdom, to allow advances to be made on much more liberal and lavish terms than they were in the habit of giving, the system would break down, and very great confusion would arise. They admitted, however, that in the present case it was desirable that advances should be made on much more liberal terms than usual, not for the purpose of promoting particular works of improvement, but for actually giving employment to the people and keeping them from starving. These were advances much more in the nature of relief works than in the nature of improvement works. If they were to make the advances out of the general fund at the disposal of the Board of Works, they felt they would be introducing a precedent exceedingly embarrassing to them in all their future dealings. On the other hand, they had to bear in mind that there did exist in Ireland a fund of a peculiarly Irish character. It was a fund which belonged to Ireland, and which it was the duty of Parliament to administer for the general benefit of Ireland. It appeared to the Government that the case which had now arisen was one which might be very fairly met by the Church Surplus Fund. They did not propose to exhaust any considerable portion of that Fund. They proposed to make, not grants, but advances out of it; and they understood that those advances would be repaid. That was the principle on which they went; and he assumed that the re-payments would, in due course, be made. It was true, as stated by the hon. and learned Member for Limerick (Mr. O'Shaughnessy), that there would be a sacrifice of a small portion of the Fund. That would be measured by the difference between the interest on the amount advanced and the amount they would receive in re-payment from those to whom the advances were made. The hon. and learned Gentleman had put the amount at £12,000. It might be that, or perhaps a little more; but he did not think the Fund could be considered to be unfairly charged with an expenditure which was distinctly for the purpose of meeting an unavoidable and sudden calamity. The visitation which had fallen upon that part of the country was a visitation which distinctly needed, and ought to be met to some extent, by charitable efforts. It was impossible to lay down the doctrine that in cases of this kind the whole of the burden should fall on the Imperial Exchequer, and that recourse should not be had to the aid of charity. He did not think that in the case of Lancashire, to which reference had been made, there were public contributions, but that the distress was met chiefly by private subscriptions, and in part by advances from the poor rates and the neighbouring Unions. The present was one of those cases in which they might fairly take advantage of the charity of individuals, and fairly have recourse to a fund applicable to charitable uses. With regard to future measures which might be adopted in order to prevent the recurrence of such evils, that was a question which demanded the most careful consideration on the part of Parliament. He quite agreed with those who said that the lessons they had received now and in former times ought to make Parliament exceedingly careful in considering what could be done to prevent the recurrence of evils of this kind. But at this moment the Government were pressed to meet the danger and the misery which were actually upon us; and he thought they might fairly have recourse to a fund which was of a peculiarly Irish character, and which was available for Irish purposes. But whatever view the House might take upon this subject, he hoped they would not delay the present stage of the Bill. The question of the application of the Church Surplus might very properly and conveniently arise on the discussion of the clauses; but with regard to the progress of the Bill, he might remind the House that the Government were now acting outside the law on their own responsibility. Although they were not at all afraid to take that responsibility, still Parliament ought to take it upon itself, and had no right to leave the matter entirely on the shoulders of the Government. He hoped, therefore, that they would be favoured with the advice and supported by the authority of Parliament as soon as possible. The House, he trusted, would agree to the second reading of the Bill; and, in that case, he should propose to fix the Committee for the earliest possible day, in order that the discussion of the clauses might be proceeded with.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY did not think it was important whether that Bill were passed now or deferred for a month. He certainly should not do anything to delay the second reading of the Bill; but he wished to remind the House that there was another Bill before them which was of the utmost importance, and with regard to which delay would be very serious. He referred to the measure for providing seeds of various kinds for the people to sow their ground with during the present spring. If that Bill did not pass into law immediately, so that the seed could be distributed within the next five or six weeks, they would next year have another famine twice as bad as that which raged now. It therefore seemed to him that the Government was labouring at an oar in the boat which was of the least importance to help them over the surf with which they were surrounded. He did not object so much to resorting to the Irish Church Surplus as he objected to resorting to it for the purpose and in the manner mentioned in the Bill. If they were to take out of the Surplus a certain amount for the purpose of restocking the ground during the approaching five or six weeks, he should consider that was a very fair way of disposing of it; but at present the Bill appeared to him to be framed under a complete misconception of the position. As a fact, the measures proposed in the Government Bill ought to have been in operation weeks and months ago. If that had been done, the people would not now have been pauperized and demoralized by the lavish distribution of charity which, coming as it did now, had unfitted them for work or for any exertion in behalf of themselves. The Government should long ago have made arrangements through some of the large houses which dealt in seed for having a stock ready to distribute among the people at the present crisis. When the seed came to be distributed he hoped it would be bestowed as a free gift and not as a loan; otherwise, the result would be to plunge the people still further into debt. It was a pure chimera to suppose that the people would eat the seed potatoes they might receive. They would do nothing of the kind; they would regard the seed as a sacred possession, the purpose of which was to avert famine next year. At any rate, the Government might rest assured that in providing adequate seed for next year lay the only chance of averting another and more terrible calamity.

The O'DONOGHUE said, that he objected to the Bill *in toto*, and for the reason that it proposed to place increased burdens upon the already over-taxed ratepayers in Ireland. The principle of the Government Bill was to make the Irish distress a local question. The principle of the Amendment of the hon. Member for Limerick (Mr. Synan) was to make it an Imperial question; and there could be no doubt as to the choice which the Representatives from Ireland should make between the two. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his speech, had intimated that the local Boards of Guardians required pressure to induce them to act. No doubt they did, for the leading spirits of the Boards of Guardians in Ireland were the landlords, and they were perfectly aware that the ratepayers of Ireland were already rented, rated, and taxed up to the utmost amount they could bear. His only object in giving Notice that he should move that the second reading of the Bill be postponed until the 19th of February was to give time for the Boards of Guardians, the members of baronial sessions, and others who were interested in the matter, to express their opinions upon it. The title of the Bill was so taking that one was apt to forget its principle. He could not believe, however, that the Liberal Party would ever assent to legislation which was contrary to their policy, and would throw greater obstacles than had ever yet been thrown in the way of the peasantry of Ireland getting that position on the soil which they were determined to obtain. It appeared to him that the main object of the Bill was to enable landlords to dispense with their tenants altogether. He considered that it was an extraordinary thing for the Government to mix up two things together which were totally distinct, one to relieve the distress in Ireland, and the other to assist the landlords. He would, at a future stage, take the opportunity of expressing the objections he felt to the Bill in detail.

Mr. P. MARTIN objected to the way in which this question had been dealt with by the Government. The Bill ought to be termed, not a measure for the general benefit of Ireland, but a Bill for the relief of landlords in certain distressed districts in that country. The present state of affairs ought to be met by Her Majesty's Ministers in a noble and statesmanlike manner, worthy of a great nation. He submitted that the Church Surplus Fund was not one out of which British generosity should supply money for the purpose; because, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, and as it was expressed in the Church Disendowment Act, the Fund was to be administered for the general benefit of Ireland, and not for the benefit of particular districts. Because there was loud-voiced clamour in the West, the Government seemed to think that only that portion of the country was distressed. Such was not the case. He did not know what authority the Chief Secretary for Ireland had for stating that there was no distress in the county of Kilkenny. On the contrary, the privations endured by both labourers and small farmers had in that county increased and were every day increasing. The labouring class might, perchance, soon get employment in assisting in the spring work; but for the farming class this prospect was most alarming. In many districts, he believed, many of the farmers were without money and already deeply in debt to the shopkeepers, not only for supplies of food, but for the seed which cropped their lands last year. They would find much difficulty in obtaining the seed to crop their farms this year. The Government measure appeared to him to provide no adequate means for the relief of distress amongst the farming class. The system which should have been adopted was one which would have set the tenant to work on his own land. The Government had misconceived the extent and proportions of the distress. He had hoped they would have introduced a fair and generous measure to meet the necessities, not only of the Western districts, but of the whole of Ireland. If his hon. Friend who had moved an Amendment to the Bill (Mr. Synan) went to a division he should accompany him to the Lobby.

MAJOR O'BEIRNE contended that the Bill was not of a nature likely to give satisfaction in Ireland. He held that the only way to meet the distress was either to give a free grant of money or to undertake the prosecution of public works, especially such works as the drainage of the Shannon, the prosecution of which would, in his opinion, be of great national advantage.

MR. D. TAYLOR expressed his satisfaction that the Government had taken up the question of supplying seed potatoes to the people; but he hoped the Bill would not be limited to potatoes. In some of the distressed districts in Donegal which he had visited, the people were in great dread that they would not have any seed, and the question was one to which the Government could not devote too much attention. He was surprised that there should be any objection to using the Church Surplus Fund for the relief of distress, more especially as the money would be advanced as a loan, and the only loss the Fund would sustain would be a small deficiency in interest. The object of the Bill was to enable the Guardians to give out-door relief, and anything that could be done to tide the people over the distress, without compelling them to enter the workhouses, would be a great boon. Owing to last year's winter, they had more work than they had last year; but it was not sufficient to stop the famine they were now suffering from. He hoped this Bill would proceed concurrently with the Seed Bill; but something more must be done if they would avoid the recurrence of this distress. Railways must be made with a view to cheap transit; harbours must be built and improved, and trade must be developed, if they would permanently remove the evils under which the country was suffering. He trusted the Government would give that subject their most earnest consideration.

MR. O'CLERY, in opposing the Bill, said, that the Government ought to look to the Consolidated Fund, and not to the Irish Church Fund, for the means of relieving the existing distress. He wished particularly to call attention to the case of the fishermen on the West coast of Ireland, who were at the present time suffering great distress, and hoped that, from whatever source the relief funds might come, something would be done to encourage the fisheries along the Irish coasts generally.

SIR PATRICK O'BRIEN said, he had expressed his views on this subject at some length the other night, when there did not seem to be much interest felt in it; in fact, there were only four or five hon. Members in the House. The Government proposed this scheme as a remedy for admitted distress; but they were acting in a somewhat Irish fashion, for, under the baronial sessions, they would be raising money from a class who themselves required relief—he meant the ratepayers. He regretted that there should have been any appeal to the charity of foreign nations for that relief which the Government should have afforded, and thought the question ought not to be complicated by reference to the Irish Church Surplus Fund. In his opinion, the principle laid down in the case of the distress in Lancashire during the Cotton Famine should be followed in that of Ireland, and that the funds for relieving the distress, unfortunately prevalent in that country, should be obtained from Imperial and not from local sources. It would be unwise to treat the distress in Ireland as a small matter compared with that of a distant English county, and he should like to hear from the Bench opposite whether they would deny that the present distress was not as great as during the Cotton Famine; and, as one of the Irish Members, he would ask why the same course should not be pursued in each case?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: They were not given anything from the Imperial Funds.

SIR PATRICK O'BRIEN must insist, however, that a loan of £1,200,000 was granted to Lancashire on Imperial security. It was admitted that relief to a large extent must be given by the Boards of Guardians; and he called upon the Government to grant out of the Imperial Exchequer a sum in aid of outdoor relief in Ireland equal to that appropriated by the Guardians for that purpose. The sum requisite for the purpose would be much less than the money which would have to be paid to Crown solicitors, Queen's counsel, and others employed to put the law in force in bloody arrangements, perhaps, before the year was out. The adoption of his suggestion would at once prevent the famine which many people anticipated, and for which, if it did occur, the Government would, after the warnings they had had, be solely responsible. He hoped that in whatever they did the Government would rise superior to Party.

THE MARQUESS OF HAMILTON said, that the favourable manner in which the Bill had been received was a proof of the sympathy which hon. Members on both sides of the House felt for Ireland in her distress, and of the approval with which the Government proposals had been received. It was undoubted that the measure before the House would be most beneficial for Ireland, as it would enable the Guardians to make ample provision of food and fuel for issue in case of necessity. It would also enable baronial presentments to be made. It was advisable, however, with respect to these presentments in aid, that due care should be taken to prevent waste of money or the perpetration of jobs. It was most advisable that railways should be promoted in every way in Ireland; and he was, therefore, glad to hear from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the various propositions in the Bill were likely to be extended in that respect. With regard to the county with which he was connected, there were no less than three railways in course of construction. Under the present distress the proprietors had not sufficient money for carrying out the purposes they had in view, and the result was that the works were at a standstill. If aid were given to enable the construction of local railways and branch lines to be proceeded with, it would considerably benefit the particular localities, and would not lead to that influx of labour from elsewhere which large railway works would be certain to create. Local labour would be employed, and that upon reproductive works. Irish Members on both sides of the House, he believed, would agree with him, when he said that they did not want so much the formation of roads, or the making of fences to improve those roads, but they wanted something of general and practical utility, and that which might hereafter be of permanent benefit to Ireland. He might also mention the formation of piers and harbours. It was a matter of regret that the Irish fisheries were not in a satisfactory state. The fishermen of Ireland were poor; but they were industrious and brave. They had no means of buying boats, nor the means of buying sufficient gear to carry on their occupation. If the Government, during the present crisis, which he was sorry to say was likely to increase on the West coast of Ireland, would grant loans for the purpose of erecting permanent small fishery piers, it would be of vast benefit to the fishing community of that country. He trusted that before this Bill passed they might find that some satisfactory means had been adopted not only to promote reproductive labour throughout the internal districts of Ireland, but also to promote the formation of railways and fishery harbours.

MR. MELDON said, that a serious question was raised as to whether the Irish Church Surplus was prohibited by the section of the Act of 1869 which dealt with it from being appropriated to such a purpose as was now in view; the section contained a special provision that the Fund was not to be employed in any way to cancel or impair the obligations now attached to property under the Acts for the relief of the poor. Under the present Bill, however, it was intended to apply the money in relief and in aid of the poor rates of Ireland. Besides being a possible misappropriation of the Fund, it would make inroads into the capital, which had already been very seriously diminished. As a matter of fact, there was no such fund in existence as the Irish Church Surplus. The Irish Commissioners, he believed, had not the command of a single 6*d*. of capital, and they had been indebted to the savings banks for the money which they had been able to place at the disposal of Parliament up to the present time. What the Bill did was to propose that the Commissioners, who had no capital, should borrow money to lend it again to the Board of Works, which in itself was an absurd proceeding. It was improper to fritter away the Surplus Fund. A national demand had been made that it should be applied to the purpose of creating a peasant proprietary in Ireland; and he thought that until that question was settled no further inroad should be made into that Fund. In the face of these considerations, the Government actually proposed to hand a large portion of the money over, not to the tenants, but to the landlords, who would thus receive exceptional facilities for improving their land. He thought that money advanced to the owners of land for the improvement of their property was most just and useful; but the question now was whether landlords should have exceptional advantages granted to them which might as usefully be granted to the tenants, and whether these exceptional advantages should be granted at the cost of the tenants. If the land were improved, the consequence would be that the tenants, at no distant time, would have to pay increased rents. He (Mr. Meldon) had suggested, in the debate on the Address, that the money should be given, if at all, to the tenants, for the purpose of improving the land, and he had been met with some representation about the rights of property. Yet the tenants would be improving the land; and if they paid all the instalments, they ought to be enabled to claim compensation for the improvements, as under the Land Act of 1870 it had been admitted they were entitled to. Was it fair that when a national calamity overtook Ireland it should be dealt with in a different way from that in which the distress in Lancashire in 1863 was met? Lancashire was then treated as an integral part of this Kingdom, and the question became an Imperial one. Why was famine in Ireland dealt with as a local question? In the case of the Lancashire Cotton Famine, £1,200,000 was advanced directly to the local authorities for the execution of permanent works. [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: At what rate of interest?] He would come to that presently. They extended the period of re-payment to 30 years. In regard to Ireland, they now proposed to make the advance of £500,000 out of a purely Irish fund re-payable, in some cases, in 10 years. [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: In 37 years.] The money which was to be advanced to the landlords was not to be repaid in 10 years; but some of the advances to public bodies were to be repaid in 10 years instead of in 30, as was the case with the Lancashire loan. The difference between the periods allowed made up for the difference in the rate of interest, which was 3½ per cent in the Lancashire instance. Moreover, in the Lancashire case there were provisions for extending the time of re-payment. The advances during the Lancashire distress were made directly to the local authorities for the purpose of works of a permanent character, whereas no such advances in the case of Ireland were to be made to the Boards of Guardians. The Government treated Ireland differently from Lancashire; and he protested againt making the relief of distress in Ireland a merely local question when the Imperial funds were without objection applied to the relief of the distress in Lancashire. He appealed to the Government to deal with the distress in Ireland in as just and fair a spirit as the distress in Lancashire had been dealt with, and to provide for the emergency out of Imperial resources. They had no right to take the Church Surplus, for it already belonged to the people for other purposes.

Mr. Alderman COTTON, referring to the allusions which had been made to the Lancashire distress, said, he was in a position to inform the House that on that occasion the relief had been mainly by very large private subscriptions. In London £520,000 had been raised, and every penny of it distributed; and by the Central Relief Committee in Lancashire, of which the late Earl of Derby was Chairman, £1,250,000 or more had been raised, not all of it being distributed. For his own part, he could not understand how hon. Members opposite could believe for a moment that the Government would be indifferent to this great calamity, or could believe that Ireland was not almost an eternal worry to them. Knowing that hon. Member after hon. Member would rise in his place and denounce the Government when Parliament met, they were not likely, even apart from any other consideration, to withhold their most serious consideration from the calamity impending in Ireland. The Irish Members seemed to him to take the bread that was offered, to them and to throw it over their heads, instead of putting it in the mouths of a famishing people. He called upon Irish Members to desist from using epithets in reference to the Government, and from expressing sentiments calculated to produce a false impression on the minds of the Irish people, which might not be eradicated for years, and which he could not believe the Irish Members themselves could believe in, except as sentiments useful for political purposes.

Mr. COGAN said, the question before the House was simply whether the funds to be charged for partially relieving the existing distress should be purely Irish funds, or whether they should be Imperial funds, as was the case in 1863 in the Lancashire Cotton Famine. He trusted the debate would not conclude until they heard in some intelligible and conclusive manner why the Government purposed taking, with regard to a national calamity in one part of the United Kingdom, a course different from that which they had pursued on a previous occasion of the kind. He had heard no good reason yet given for subjecting Ireland to the exceptional treatment now proposed, and should therefore support the Amendment, believing that this national calamity in Ireland ought to be met out of the National Exchequer. Attempts had been made from time to time to fritter away the Irish Church Surplus Fund, which the Act of Parliament had intended should be appropriated for the permanent benefit of the whole of Ireland; whereas the object of the present Bill was to meet an exigency now existing in parts of that country, and not in the whole of it.

Mr. J. LOWTHER said, he could not agree with the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down (Mr. Cogan), that in the proposal now submitted to the House there was anything which ran counter to the Act of Parliament which dealt with the Irish Church property. The right hon. Member said it was never contemplated by that Act that the money should be expended on local matters, but only for purposes which could benefit the whole of Ireland. He would find, however, if he referred to the words of the Act, that it stated that the Church Surplus should be appropriated mainly to the relief of unavoidable calamity and suffering, and there was nothing in it which said that the calamity and suffering must equally prevail at the same moment in all parts of Ireland. He maintained, therefore, that the Government were fully justified in proposing to use a portion of that Fund for a purpose like the present one. The hon. and learned Member for Kildare (Mr. Meldon) had compared the treatment Lancashire received in a great emergency with that received by Ireland, and appeared to think—and, no doubt, did so with perfect sincerity—that the comparison was unfavourable to the latter country. Now, the money advanced to Lancashire was advanced at 3½ per cent. But it was said the period of re-payment was easier and more advantageous to the borrower in the case of Lancashire. [Mr. Synan: In some cases.] Well, the principle on which they had gone in regard to these re-payments was that the payments should be regulated according to the operation of the ordinary law, with certain exceptions. The period for re-payment was to extend as long as the benefit to be derived from the contemplated works should last. For example, in regard to advances for paving, it was impossible that loans for works of such an ephemeral description should be allowed to burden the ratepayers for 30 or 40 years. The loans under the Public Health Act varied in the times of re-payment from two years up to 50, according as the work was of a permanent or a temporary character. With regard to advances to Irish landowners, the Government had relaxed the ordinary rules as to re-payment, and they had done it on that principle. It had been represented on authority given in evidence that the benefit arising from draining would extend over a longer period than 22 years; and they had, therefore, extended the time for re-payment. Anyone who chose to study what was done in Lancashire would find that the terms offered to Ireland were more liberal than those imposed in Lancashire. He was not referring to the large amount of local contributions raised in Lancashire; but the hon. and learned Member for Kildare had spoken of benefits conferred on the landowners as if they were a national injury to Ireland. That notion seemed to underlie a great many of the fallacies to which they had listened for several nights. But to say that advances made to persons in possession of the soil for the purpose of improving the soil could be considered as a national injury appeared to him a proposition which did not require an answer in that House. The ground on which the Government had selected the landowners as the medium for giving employment and wages to the people was one which he thought must commend itself to the common sense of every hon. Member. The Government had felt itself bound to adopt exceptional measures to meet the extraordinary distress which prevailed in certain parts of Ireland. They might have had recourse to the system which broke down before—namely, that of public relief works conducted by the State; but it seemed better to allow employment to find its way to the people through the ordinary sources. They had, therefore, enabled owners of land to apply large sums of money, amounting already, he believed, to something like £500,000, upon the express condition that the works upon which they were to be expended should be confined to such occupations as would afford immediate employment to unskilled labour. Buildings and other works, however profitable, which did not fulfil this condition, were not to enjoy the facilities they granted. If there was one thing more than another for which the Government deserved credit, he thought it was for avoiding any unnecessary disturbance of the ordinary relations between employer and employed, and for having in no way set aside the ordinary sources of employment of labour in the country. The hon. and learned Member for Kildare had spoken of lavish distribution of charitable funds. It was a pity that such an expression should go forth from the House of Commons. There was no reason to believe that those excellent organizations which, fortunately, had come to the aid of distress in Ireland had been distributed upon a lavish scale. No doubt, it was the intention of those who distributed those funds to meet every case of need which came before them; but it would be a great injury to the good cause of charity if it went forth from that House that the distribution of those funds had been in any manner extravagant. The hon. and learned Member had also spoken of the large inroads which had been already made in the Irish Church Surplus Fund, as though he would have liked every penny of it to be embarked in the speculation of endeavouring by artificial means to create a peasant proprietary in Ireland. But his hon. and learned Friend was himself, perhaps as much as anyone, responsible for a very considerable inroad into that Fund, an inroad which had commended itself to the general opinion of Ireland and of every portion of the United Kingdom. The hon. and learned Member seemed to proceed upon the assumption that any sum advanced out of that Church Surplus Fund would be lost, and some hon. Members had appeared to think that the Government were unfairly protecting the Consolidated Fund at its expense. But this would imply that the Unions of Ireland were not capable of maintaining their credit. The Government proposed to lend money, in the first place, upon the security of the landed property; and he supposed the hon. and learned Member would admit that to be good enough

They also proposed to lend upon the security of the rates; and this, he presumed, the hon. and learned Member did not think good enough. But he hoped his prognostications of ill would not be fulfilled, and that, as had been the case up to the present time in Lancashire, not one penny would be lost. He thought the House must have seen that the Government had, in the present crisis, exerted themselves to meet everything that could be reasonably urged upon the Executive, and that, without discouraging local effort or charitable organization, they had in no way failed in their duty. And he further believed that the House and the country would not for a moment believe they had neglected their duty.

Mr. SHAW hoped the hon. Member for Limerick (Mr. Synan) would not divide the House that evening upon his Amendment, as there would be another opportunity of discussing its principle upon the question of the Speaker leaving the Chair. The Government had already taken action on the lines of the Bill, and he was sure they would all be willing to pass a measure of indemnity to the Government for what they had already done; all the Irish Members complained of being that they had not acted with sufficient promptness. It was certainly not his opinion that any benefit conferred upon the landlords must be a public injury, and he did not know from what hon. Member's speeches the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland could have gathered such an idea. He thought the drainage of land was one of the best things that could be done, and the lending of money at a low rate of interest for that purpose would be not only an immense advantage to the community, but would also bring labour nearer than any other way to the workmen. Every provision in this direction deserved great praise. What they blamed the Government for was for not issuing the Circular of the 12th of January on the 12th of October. They also feared lest the landlords, after getting this £500,000 of public money at 1 per cent, by means of which the land would be increased in value, should thereafter raise the rents. He was sure the Government did not wish that; but it was hardly in human nature to do otherwise. Foreseeing that such a result would be sure to raise unpleasant relations between landlord and tenant, he hoped the Government would insert some words to prevent the raising of rents on account of the improvements effected by means of public money. It would be a great hardship that public money given at such a crisis, freely and generously, should be followed by a burden which, in some cases, the people would not be able to bear. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had announced what was a matter of great importance — namely, that the proposed works should not be confined to mere road-making and road-fencing. He hoped that the Government proposals were not all that Ministers intended to do. He did not ask them to answer him at once; but if the Bill embodied the whole of their scheme he did not think it would be worth taking. He thought that they ought to make a grant to Ireland, and he thought that Ireland had a right to expect such a grant as had been made in 1847. The Irish people were unfairly taxed, and that was an additional reason for a grant. No doubt, there was a great outflow of charity; but charity would not help the small farmers, and would not be a permanent benefit. He hoped the Government would give another opportunity of considering the measure, and would not press it forward too hastily.

Mr. SYNAN said, he would not ask the House to take the trouble of a useless division, but repeat his Motion on going into Committee. He was determined that the Treasury Bench and the Opposition Bench should speak out further on the subject.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

BANKRUPTCY LAW AMENDMENT BILL

(*Mr. Attorney General, Mr. Solicitor General.*)

[BILL 37.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Attorney General.*)

Sir HENRY JAMES said, that, although the Bill had only been in their hands 36 hours, yet, as it was substantially the same as that brought before the House last Session, he should not delay the second reading by asking for time to consider it. The only material alteration in the Bill, as compared with that of last Session, was that a debtor was not allowed to be made a bankrupt on his own petition, which he regarded as a great improvement. As he understood it to be the intention of his hon. and learned Friend (the Attorney General) to have the Bill referred to a Select Committee, he did not think it desirable to enter into a discussion of its provisions in detail on the present occasion. He should give his hon. and learned Friend all the assistance in his power to pass this measure and the Criminal Code Bill, because the character, not so much of the Government, as of the House, was at stake, and he hoped they would do something to redeem their character during the present Session.

MR. OSBORNE MORGAN said, he should have been inclined, on an ordinary occasion, to ask for further time; but the matter was so urgent and time had become so precious that he did not think he would be justified in doing so. He agreed with the remarks of his hon. and learned Friend, and said that by the Controller's Report it appeared that £25,000,000 was lost annually in this country by bad debts in bankruptcy alone, a sum nearly equal to the interest on the National Debt. Such a state of affairs was a disgrace, he would not say to the Government, but to Parliament, and he looked upon the Bill as a step towards a better state of affairs. He contemplated with satisfaction the fact that the Bill was to be referred to a Select Committee.

MR. SAMPSON LLOYD believed that the best way of getting some measure on bankruptcy passed in the present Session was to send the Bill to a Select Committee, as the Government proposed to do. He was of opinion that it would be useless to attempt to introduce any very ambitious innovations in Bankruptcy Law, and believed that the fundamental principle of the Act of 1869 was a right one. What was wanted by business men was not to sweep the Act of 1869 away, but to amend its blots, and he believed that these could be amended by a very short Statute. The principal evils from which they suffered under the existing law were, after all, but few. They suffered, in the first place, from an absolute want of control over liquidations; and, in the second place, it would be well if the costs of all officers connected with liquidations were officially taxed. Then they wanted what the Government Bill did not provide for —namely, the Scotch system of making trustees pay dividends periodically, and he trusted the Select Committee would come to that conclusion. He should also like to see some provision to prevent fraudulent men who had failed disgracefully three or four times from going into business again and underselling the honest tradesmen; and he hoped some of the legal Members of the House would be able to provide some that would be found effectual in preventing that evil. He concluded by expressing his satisfaction that the Bill was going to a Select Committee.

MR. GOSCHEN expressed a hope that the Bill might be taken in hand without any delay. He could say, on behalf of his constituents, that they took a deep interest in the matter, and were most anxious that there should be some legislation in reference to it this Session. He agreed that it would be unwise to enter into a discussion of the details at the present time, but thought it might be convenient to hon. Members if the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General would point out in what important particulars, if in any, the Bill differed from that of last year.

MR. GREGORY said, he had looked through the Bill, and could say that it differed from the Bill of last year in being a supplementary Bill, instead of a consolidating one; but that, like the Bill of last year, it provided that all liquidations should be by deed of arrangement, instead of resolutions of shareholders. Of this he very much approved; the execution of a deed being a deliberate act and giving a man time for reflection; whilst, generally speaking, at a meeting of creditors, the resolutions to be passed and the appointment of the trustee were a foregone conclusion. He was glad that the Bill was to be referred for consideration to a Select Committee, as some of its details required attention; for instance, those referring to the discharge of the bankrupt. He also thought it was a defect in the Bill as it stood that the onus of showing the cause of failure should be thrown on the creditors. It ought, in his opinion, to be thrown on the Court. There were several other points that would require serious consideration; but he did not think it necessary to enlarge on them, as it was intended to refer the measure to a Select Committee.

MR. WHITWELL said, that the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General had shown himself anxious that the country should possess a really good Law of Bankruptcy. He fully approved the course which had been accepted by the hon. and learned Member for Taunton (Sir Henry James), that the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee. It was just the kind of measure the country wanted, being not a reversal or change of the law, but an amendment of the law, and he trusted it would soon become the law of the land.

MR. MUNTZ expressed a hope that no time would be lost in appointing the Committee, whose duty it would be to consider the details of the measure. There were several clauses of the Bill which would require special consideration; but he would refrain from discussing them until they had been dealt with in the manner proposed.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir JOHN HOLKER) said, he felt that the appeal which had been made to him by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for London (Mr. Goschen) was a perfectly reasonable one, and he should briefly explain the leading provisions of the measure. The Bill of last Session was not designed to sweep away the Act of 1869, but rather to amend it, at the same time repealing the Act and consolidating the law upon the subject—a more ambitious design than that of the present Bill. On reflection, and considering the difficulty of passing through the House of Commons—at all events of this day—a Bill consisting of 150 or 160 clauses, upon every one of which a discussion might be raised, if any hon. Member thought proper to raise it, he thought it best to bring in a Bill not to amend and consolidate the law, but to attempt merely to amend the law, leaving its consolidation for some future period. The Bill of last year proposed to amend the Act of 1869 in several respects—in the first place as to liquidation by arrangement, in the next as to compositions under the Act, and to substitute for liquidation by arrangement, deeds to be entered into between the debtor and a majority in number and three-fourths in value of his creditors. After providing certain minor amendments, especially with regard to the audit of accounts and the action which the Controller might take in regard to the accounts of trustees, last year's Bill provided that a debtor should not, in the first instance, be absolutely declared a bankrupt, but that there should be made against him a provisional order, and that he should not be made a bankrupt until the creditors had been called together and had decided that he should be made one. The present was an amending Bill; but not a consolidating and an amending Bill. It did not adopt provisional orders; but it allowed adjudication in bankruptcy to be declared at once, as under the present system. The Bill of last Session enabled a debtor to petition against himself and to cause himself to be declared a bankrupt. Upon consideration it had been determined that that provision should not now be inserted, as it would be taken too much advantage of by debtors. What this Bill did was to provide certain amendments in the Act of 1869. One of these was the entire abolition of liquidations by arrangement. There were provisions for compelling trustees to pay all monies they might receive from time to time into the bank, and to provide for the taxation of all costs and the audit of all accounts, not only in bankruptcy, but under deeds of arrangement as well. There were a variety of smaller provisions designed to protect estates from waste and to preserve them for the benefit of the creditors. He was not at all inclined to differ from the hon. Member for Plymouth (Mr. Sampson Lloyd), when he said that the Act of 1869 was founded on a right principle. At all events, it was one which was perfectly intelligible, because it did away with the system of officialism which had existed to a considerable extent before, and it vested the administration or management of a debtor's estate and the dealing with the debtor in the creditor. He dared say the Act of 1869 would have worked well but for two circumstances. One was that the creditors would not let the Act work well; they would not look after their own affairs. In Scotland it was different; creditors were more canny than in England, where they were apathetic, put the pen through an account as a bad debt, and would not trouble themselves to look after their own interests. It was difficult to legislate for people who would not exert themselves on behalf of themselves; but it must be done. Creditors must be protected against their own apathy and supineness, and this might almost be called a Bill to protect creditors in spite of themselves. There were restraints proposed by the Bill for the purpose of rendering it difficult that an estate should be wasted, notwithstanding that the creditors would not look after a debtor's estate. Another reason why the Act of 1869 had not worked well was that it provided what might be called a gentlemanly way of getting rid of a man's liability. It was then thought desirable that every case should not go into Court; that, in certain circumstances, a man should not be exposed to the stigma of bankruptcy; and that he should not be subjected to the disagreeable ordeal of a public examination. It was therefore enacted that a man might liquidate by arrangement and offer to make a composition with his creditors. For some reason, Parliament forgot that it was necessary to have checks and restraints in these cases as well as in ordinary bankruptcies. There was no provision for taxing bills or auditing accounts. So if the debtor and his friends could get a sufficient number of proxies, they did pretty much what they liked. The Report of the Controller showed the disastrous working of this system. There could be no doubt that liquidations had worked badly, and that there had been enormous waste in dealing with estates. He proposed to do away altogether with these liquidations and with compositions as well, and to substitute for them arrangements by deed. His opinion was that, as a rule, a man who was not able to pay his debts ought to go through the Bankruptcy Courts, and be subjected to a public examination as to the mode in which he spent his money, and how it had happened that he had fallen into embarrassment. There were many cases in which it was desirable that there should be no adjudications in bankruptcy, but that men who were unable to fulfil their engagements should be allowed to proceed in business in order that they might subsequently pay their debts without the stigma attached to them of having been adjudicated bankrupts and passed examinations as bankrupts in public Courts. In order to meet cases of this kind, it was proposed by the Bill to allow debtors in such circumstances to compound with their creditors; but it also provided that this should only be done with the consent of a large proportion of such creditors, both with regard to number and value. Furthermore, it was proposed that this consent should be given personally, and not by means of proxies. He, for one, thought it important that the system of proxies in bankruptcy proceedings should be abolished as far as possible. This was most important as far as arrangements by deed were concerned; and the proposal in reference to it contained in the Bill would, he thought, have a satisfactory result as far as the commercial world was concerned. As far as compositions were concerned, it was proposed to enact that they should not be accepted unless the debtors offered 5*s.* in the pound, or any similar sum was accepted by four-fifths in number and value of the creditors. His intention was—when the Bill got before a Select Committee, to take such steps and to secure the calling of such witnesses, mercantile as well as legal, as would enable the Government in the course of the present Session to pass an Act which would amend the Bankruptcy Law in a satisfactory manner, and a manner superior to the Scotch system, of which they had heard so much.

MR. NORWOOD said, there was almost an unanimity of opinion that the Government had shown great judgment in introducing an amendment Bill instead of a consolidation of the law. The Act of 1869 was a consolidating Act; and under the existing Act the trustee was invested with too much power, being practically the master of the creditors, instead of their servant. Speaking for the other commercial Members of the House, he would say that they would endeavour to associate themselves thoroughly with the legal Members, and would endeavour to turn out, as soon as they possibly could, an amendment of the Bill satisfactory to the whole House.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* to a Select Committee.

And, on February 23, Committee *nominated* as follows:—Mr. ATTORNEY GENERAL, Mr. SOLICITOR GENERAL, Sir HENRY JACKSON, Mr. MEREWETHER, Mr. HERSCHELL, Mr. GREGORY, Mr. MORLEY, Mr. GORST, Mr. MUNTZ, Mr. NORWOOD, Mr. SAMPSON LLOYD, Sir CHARLES MILLS, Mr. MUNDELLA, Mr. WILLIAM BECKETT DENISON, Mr. RATHBONE, Mr. Alderman COTTON, Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN, Mr. HERMON, Sir SYDNEY WATERLOW, Mr. BATES, Sir JOSEPH M'KENNA, Mr. KNOWLES, and Mr. WHITWELL; Five to be the quorum.

CHARTERED BANKS (COLONIAL) BILL.

(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

[BILL 4.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson.*)

MR. RAMSAY, in moving that the Bill be read a second time that day six months, said, he must be allowed to express his surprise that, when introducing a Bill involving principles so important, Her Majesty's Ministers, who had charge of the measure, had not given some explanation as to its provisions and intended effect. He need not occupy much of the time of the House in stating the reasons why he objected to its passing. He had opposed the Bill when it was before the House last Session, and he had hitherto heard neither explanation nor justification of it. What was proposed by the Bill was to grant certain powers, privileges, and immunities to particular institutions specified in the Schedule, and he could see no special reason for granting such powers and privileges. He did not desire to say anything against the institutions in question. He had no doubt that they were perfectly respectable; but he could see no reason for granting to them special powers and privileges which were not conferred upon other bodies carrying on the same business in the same localities, and which did not enjoy such special advantages. That was the chief ground upon which he urged his objection. He would not feel disposed, seeing that these Charters were terminable, to object to a proposal to extend their provisions for a certain period, say five years; but when asked to perpetuate indefinitely those powers and privileges on some institutions which others did not enjoy, all he could say was, rather than sanction a proposal so exceptional, it would be better that the Charters should be swept away at once, and that all who carried on the business of banking should be placed on the same footing. Certain institutions had obtained by Charter powers which, in fact, constituted a sort of monopoly, and that by the Bill Parliament was asked to sanction for ever. To such a proposal he had serious objection. He thought it detrimental to the public interest in the Colonies and in the United Kingdom. As he had already said, if the proposal was for a limited period, he would not offer opposition; and probably within five years the whole subject of banking would have to be dealt with by Parliament. In Scotland they had an analogous state of things to that which it was proposed to institute by the Bill. Three of the leading banks had certain powers and privileges which other institutions did not enjoy, one by Act of Parliament and two by Charters, and the Bill proposed to establish a similar inequality in the respective Colonies. To that system might be traced a great deal of the evils which had attended the operations of some of those institutions which were not so favoured. Further, as an inducement to the House to pause before going on with the Bill, they had not got the Charters before them in order to judge of what they were doing; but they were really being asked to legislate entirely in the dark. It was not reasonable to ask the House to sanction a proposal to confer exceptional powers and privileges, of the nature and extent of which neither the Members of that House nor the public had any knowledge. Let the Charters be produced and explained that they might know what they were doing. He did not say that he had any objection to the institutions sought to be favoured by this measure. They were, no doubt, as was said, highly respectable. He felt sure of that, and when waited on himself last year to try to pursuade him to withdraw his opposition to the Bill, he said that if a Bill were introduced to confer on all banking institutions having offices in the respective localities the same privileges, he would not hesitate to give such a measure most favourable consideration, and, at least, it might pass without his opposition. But he did decidedly object to confirm a monopoly of this character—if not a monopoly, at least an exceptional advantage—for if it was not an advantage, why were they asked to legislate on the subject? Those were the grounds upon which he opposed the Bill at first; they were now equally strong, and he should accordingly move its rejection.

DR. CAMERON, in rising to second the Amendment, said, that if any hon. Member of the House desired to inform himself on the subject of chartered banks, he would find great difficulty in doing so. He had asked the Treasury and the Board of Trade to lay before the House a Return on the subject, and he was told that the Charters were public documents, and that they could be obtained. He had found that statement correct; but on examination he found that these Charters were preserved in the Record Office in such a form as rendered them practically unavailable for reference. They were often extremely voluminous and complicated documents. Yet they were asked, without a word of inquiry, to renew all the Charters of the colonial banks by a stroke of the pen. His hon. Friend (Mr. Ramsay) had referred to the banks scheduled as being the only banks dealt with by the Bill; but that appeared not to be the case. So far as he could make out, it was proposed in the case of the banks scheduled that they should be able to do some things, which at present they required the sanction of the Treasury to do, without any sanction at all; but as far as other banks were concerned—[The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: Those are the only banks.] The words of the Bill were—

> "Nothing in this Act shall authorize any Banking Companies mentioned under the Schedule of this Act to exercise any power in relation to the issue or otherwise in respect of notes, or in relation to the establishment of branches in the Colony that is not exercised at the time of the passing of this Act."

That did not refer to all the chartered banks. [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: Yes.] On what grounds, then, were they to deal with the chartered banks in the Colonies without dealing with those at home? The Government did not, and never had, carried out the investigations with regard to these banks, for which they were responsible. For instance, banks were compelled to hold gold against notes, and the Treasury had the power of seeing that they did so; but, as was shown after the City of Glasgow Bank failure, they never performed that duty. There were two privileges conferred on these chartered banks by the Charter which it was proposed to perpetuate. These were the limitation of liability, and the power of issuing notes. The power of issuing notes was a matter which did not so much interest the public in this country; but the matter of limitation of liability undoubtedly did. Now, they would find in the banks scheduled that in some cases the liability was limited to the amount of shares; in other cases it was limited to twice that amount; in the case of the Ionian Bank, it was limited, in respect of the shares held in Greece, to the amount paid up; while in respect of those held in England, it was double that amount. Again, in the case of the Egyptian Bank it was twice the amount of shares, and the liability ceased at the time of transfer. That was quite a different liability to any contemplated under the Companies Acts. Why were they to give these banks perpetual Charters? Even the Bank of England had no such Charter. Its privileges were terminable one year after the payment of the Public Debt. Under this Bill they proposed to give perpetuity to all the anomalies existing in chartered banks—a power and privilege which they did not consider necessary in the case of the Bank of England. He would also point out that it was not easy to arrive at what the limitations of the liabilities of these banks were. All his information was gathered from the *Stock Exchange Year Book;* but the compiler of that work was compelled to rely for his information on the officials of the various Chartered Companies. There was practically no means of obtaining independent information as to the liabilities of these banks, and the subject was pre-eminently one which, before being dealt with, should be investigated by a Committee. He should have no objection to what was proposed, if the Bill limited the privileges of the Charters to two, three, or five years; but he most decidedly objected to their being made perpetual. He, therefore, seconded the Amendment.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Ramsay.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON said, that he would not have moved the second reading of the Bill in silence had it not been identical with that which was introduced last Session, but did not pass into law. The reasons for the introduction of the Bill were very simple. The House was aware that, before the passing of the Limited Companies Liability Acts, there had existed for more than 30 or 40 years certain banks which possessed Royal Charters. For any alteration or extension of their branches, or for the renewal of a term upon which their Charters were originally granted, those banks had to come to the Treasury for such renewal or increase of their powers. A responsibility was thus thrown upon the Treasury in regard to matters on which it was not very well able to form an opinion or to exercise a sound judgment. It was, therefore, thought at one time that it might be possible to let the Charters expire; but the disadvantages of placing those banks under the Limited Companies Acts were found to be so great that the Charters were renewed for a short period, in order that a Bill might be submitted to the House for the purpose of relieving the Treasury from a responsibility which it could not properly exercise. Under the present Bill the banks would simply have the same powers which they now possessed, subject to the legislation of the countries in which they existed. The only object of the Bill, therefore, was to relieve the Treasury from the responsibility of renewing the Charters, and to place the banks under the jurisdiction of the countries in which they carried on business.

Mr. MUNTZ understood the object of the Bill to be the perpetual renewal of the Charters under which these banks existed. The House had had no time to look into the matter, for this Bill was not introduced until the end of last Session, and was withdrawn without being fully discussed. He should like to know whether it was proposed to give the Legislatures of all the countries in which the banks carried on business power to alter their constitutions? For instance, was the Bank of Egypt to be subject to the jurisdiction of the Khedive? Then, with regard to Canada, he doubted very much whether the House had power to make laws with regard to banks in the Dominion. Before a measure of this kind was passed they ought to have time to consider the subject fully. There must be some object in view with regard to the Bill; and if that object were only to relieve the Treasury from an unpleasant duty, he should suggest that the Charters should be renewed for five, seven, or 10 years, and not in perpetuity.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, that one of the greatest objections to continuing these Charters for a limited time was that one of the banks held a perpetual Charter. He would endeavour to explain how the matter stood. A good many years ago, before the establishment of joint stock banks was authorized by law, banks could not exist without some kind of Charter. About 1840, and in later years, the promoters of banks in the Colonies were in the habit of asking the Crown for Charters to enable them to exist. In no other way could they be established, and the Crown usually granted the Charters. Almost all those Charters contained a proviso that the actions of the banks should be regulated by the consent of the Treasury. Subsequently, joint stock banks were founded under the sanction of Parliament. The 11 banks referred to in the Bill had, however, remained in the condition of chartered banks, and as such had, no doubt, certain advantages, both as regarded their standing and also as being, to a certain extent, independent of the legislation of the Colonies. They were under the regulation of the Treasury; but, as time went on, the Treasury found it exceedingly awkward to exercise the power confided to it. Matters requiring alterations of the Charters, either by the establishment of branch banks or by changes in the system of issuing notes, had to be decided in Downing Street by officers of the Treasury, who had no great knowledge of the matter. The Treasury would have been glad to renew the Charters for a limited time, and then allowed them to cease. But that would have thrown the banks out of gear, and it would have been exceedingly difficult for them to register themselves as joint stock banks, and there was the further difficulty that one of the banks had a perpetual Charter. The banks had carried on their business exceedingly well, and there was no reason for wishing to put an end to their existence. The difficulties in the way of altering their constitution by bringing them under the Companies Acts were very great, owing to numbers of the shares being in the names of trustees, and other matters of that kind. Moreover, the effect of that measure would have been still to leave one chartered bank, and one only, in existence. The Government, therefore, thought it best to get rid of the responsibility of having to revise and correct the proceedings of these banks, and to establish, in the first place, certain general principles as to the mode in which they were to act in matters affecting their constitution; and, in the second place, to leave to the Colonial Governments such power of regulating their proceedings as might prevent their having any unfair advantages in comparison with other banks. They, therefore, proposed in this Bill to make Charters perpetual, and to leave to the bank itself, under proper conditions, the power of increasing its capital, altering the amount of its shares, and other such matters—in fact, to apply to them similar provisions to those by which other joint stock banks were regulated. Clause 6 was very important, for it was the clause which put the bank under the regulation of the Government of the Colony in which it existed. First of all, with regard to the issue of notes, it was provided that nothing in the Act should authorize the banks to exercise any power which they were not exercising at the passing of the Act, save with the consent of the Governor of the Colony. Further, the banks were to do nothing at any time or place which might, at that time, be illegal according to the law in force in the Colony. If the Legislature of any Colony passed a law regulating banks, then these banks would be as much subject to it as other banks in the Colony. The Treasury had considered whether it would be best for it to take the responsibility of extinguishing the Charters of the banks, or introducing new restrictions. They had found that they would not be able to extinguish the Charter of one of the largest and most important of these banks; and they had, therefore, thought it best to introduce the present measure. If the House rejected the Bill their present difficulties would continue. He, therefore, hoped the House would see that there was nothing in it which should cause anxiety, and would allow it to proceed.

MR. RATHBONE did not see that there was any objection to relieving the Treasury from its present responsibility; but he thought they should know exactly what they were doing. No doubt, if the House had everything before it, it would agree with the proposal of the Government; but it had not at present the materials before it upon which to form an opinion. He should like to know what the provision of the Charters in question were? He would venture to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to lay the Charters before the House prior to asking it to come to a conclusion. He did not mean to suggest that the Charters should be printed and circulated, but that hon. Members should have access to them. No doubt it would be found that the banks had been well conducted, and that their Charters were good; but at present they had no means of knowing whether the banks were complying with their Charters or not. It seemed to him to be very important, for the safety of the public and of the proprietors of the banks, that they should have every information before them before passing this Act.

MR. RYLANDS did not object to the Bill, but, on the contrary, was entirely in its favour. The Bill appeared to him to be not only a reasonable but a necessary measure. He was aware that the gentlemen connected with the chartered banks had found great difficulties in developing their business in consequence of the restrictions imposed by the Treasury. His hon. Friend (Dr. Cameron) looked with very great suspicion upon the proposal to place these chartered banks upon a permanent footing. The possession of a Charter was a considerable advantage to a bank, and the public had a right to know that the powers and privileges given to the chartered banks were of such a nature as not to be injurious to the public at large, or to be an interference with the fair prosecution of business by similar institutions. With every disposition to support the second reading of the Bill, he was very much inclined to think that, before the Bill was absolutely passed into law, it would be desirable that an opportunity should be given, by referring the matter to a Select Committee, to ascertain the exact position now occupied by the chartered banks. It did appear to him that, without the publication of Charters, it might be possible for a Committee to which the Bill could be referred to ascertain the nature of the Charters and the way in which business was now carried on. If it were found that the nature of the Charters was unobjectionable, then he did not think there was any right to refuse to grant the holders a permanent interest in them. He observed that there was a provision in the Bill which met some of the objections raised. It was provided that nothing in the Act should prevent Her Majesty revoking the Charters if necessity should arise. There was another provision—namely, in the event of insolvency the Charters and supplemental Charters issued to the bank should be revoked and become void. That was necessary to prevent some arrangement being made by which, in the case of insolvency, the bank could pass its Charter over to another institution. He presumed that, had there been any legal means of establishing joint stock banks in former days, these Charters would never have been granted; and, undoubtedly, no further Charters would be issued, because banks would be established under the Acts now in operation. But they were dealing with property which did exist, and which ought not to be interfered with unless good cause could be shown to the contrary. Before legislating on the subject, it would be, however, only reasonable that the House should know exactly, through a Committee, or otherwise, the position of the banks under the Bill.

Mr. CHILDERS wished to say a few words upon the Bill from more than one point of view. In the Colony with which he had been many years ago connected, they had some banks chartered by the Imperial Government, and others by the local Legislature under special Acts. The question was more than once raised in the Colony of a general Banking Act, especially in connection with the issue of paper money; and it became his duty as a Minister of the Colony to look carefully into the question whether these anomalies could be removed, and especially that Charters should be made uniform. He was bound to say that the result of his consideration was that something like the present Bill would be an improvement. He did not think that the Treasury or the Board of Trade should be allowed to retain the power of granting Charters in Her Majesty's name; but he thought that the banks that now existed might be allowed to retain their Charters permanently if they were adapted to the present condition of things. He quite agreed with the general scope of the Bill which was now brought forward. From an Imperial point of view, he was strongly impressed with the necessity of taking the conduct of this business from the Treasury and the Board of Trade, by passing some general Act which would relieve them from functions which they could not satisfactorily perform. From both points of view, therefore, he could not but give his support to the Bill. The only question that presented itself was whether the Charters were well adapted to the state of things which now existed; and it struck him that the words of the Act did not make it sufficiently clear that it was absolutely left to every Colony to make its own general laws with respect to banks and to deal with the privileges of the chartered banks provided the Acts referred to all other banks in the Colony. On the other hand, it was necessary to remember that many of these banks did not carry on business in one Colony, only but in several, and thus could not, without complication, rest on local Charters only. In providing, therefore, that the Colonial Legislature should be at liberty to take away the privileges of these banks they must be careful to make them also subject to Imperial legislation, where they existed in more than one Colony. He thought it very desirable that the Bill should pass into law, subject to such minute inquiry as would be made before a Select Committee. He could hardly support the suggestion that all they required to know was the nature of the Charters. Although, from one point of view, this was a public measure, yet it was also essentially a Private Bill, because it endowed certain private companies with various powers and privileges. It partook, therefore, both of the nature of a public and a Private Bill, and he did not think the House should pass it without careful examination; and he would propose that it should be referred to a Select Committee. If the Government would consent to that course being taken, he thought the objections of his hon. Friends would be very fairly met. The Bill could be referred to a Select Committee, with power to make the fullest investigations into each Charter, and when their Report had been received the Bill would again come before the House.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK entirely concurred with the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Pontefract that the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee. He thought that if Her Majesty's Government would modify Clause 2 by allowing the Treasury, after the expiry of the Charters, to terminate them at any time on giving reasonable notice, and that until this was done, they should continue in force, the proposal, he believed, would meet a great many of the objections raised.

MR. RAMSAY would ask leave to withdraw his Amendment, on the understanding that the Bill went before a Select Committee, with power to have the Charters before it. He hoped that the question, in all its bearings, would be fully gone into before the Committee. He only required investigation of the subject, and fully approved of the proposal in the Bill to relieve the Treasury of the responsibility of dealing with these Charters.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* to a Select Committee.

And, on February 20, Committee *nominated* as follows:—Mr. LOWE, Sir JOHN LUBBOCK, Mr. MULHOLLAND, Mr. RAMSAY, Mr. ARTHUR MILLS, Mr. SHAW, Mr. FRESHFIELD, Mr. SAMPSON LLOYD, and Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON:—Power to send for persons, papers, and records; Five to be the quorum.

ARTIZANS' AND LABOURERS' DWELLINGS IMPROVEMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT (1875) AMENDMENT BILL.

(*The Lord Advocate, Sir Matthew Ridley.*)

[BILL 5.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

DR. CAMERON did not think that this Bill should be proceeded with at so late an hour. The measure interfered considerably with the rights at present enjoyed by owners of property in Scotland. He did not wish at the present moment to express any opinion concerning the measure; but he considered that it ought not to be brought on without those interested—landlords, tenants, and municipal authorities in the various towns in Scotland—having some opportunity of making their views known on the subject.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. WATSON) said, it was with very considerable surprise that he had heard a borough Member from Scotland object to this Bill. The object of the measure was to enable municipal authorities in Scotland to carry out more effectively the provisions of the Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act. The whole purpose of the Bill was to extend to Scotland the provisions of the amending Act with regard to artizans' and labourers' dwellings which passed through Parliament last year, but which was only made applicable to England and Ireland. Certain Scotch boroughs had not taken it very kindly that they were left under disadvantages from which England and Ireland were freed by the Act of last Session. It was at their instigation that he had introduced the present Bill, the sole purpose of which was to place local authorities in Scotland in the same position as those in other parts of the United Kingdom. Under those circumstances, he trusted that the hon. Member would not throw obstacles in the way of the Bill.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Bill *reported,* without Amendment; to be read the third time *To-morrow.*

ANCIENT MONUMENTS [EXPENSES].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of all Expenses which may become payable by the Commissioners, under the provisions of any Act of the present Session, to provide for the better protection of Ancient Monuments.

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS QUALIFICATIONS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. ERRINGTON, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Qualifications required for holding certain Medical Appointments, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. ERRINGTON and Mr. BLENNERHASSETT.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 71.]

EPPING FOREST ACT (1878) (CONTINUANCE) BILL.

On Motion of Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON, Bill to continue for a limited period the powers of the Arbitrator under "The Epping Forest Act, 1878," *ordered* to be brought in by Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON and Mr. GERARD NOEL.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 73.]

INDIAN SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. EDWARD STANHOPE, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Salaries and Allowances of certain Officers in India; and for other purposes relating thereto, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. EDWARD STANHOPE and Lord GEORGE HAMILTON.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 72.]

House adjourned at One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 13*th February,* 1880.

AFGHAN WAR—ALLEGED SEVERITIES AT CABUL—EXPLANATION OF GENERAL ROBERTS.

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK: My Lords, your Lordships are aware that certain charges have been made against General Sir Frederick Roberts of cruelties at Cabul. We have received at the India Office to-day a letter which, with the permission of your Lordships, I will read. It is in these terms—

"I am extremely grateful to you for so kindly writing to me with regard to attacks being made on me in certain quarters respecting ill-treatment of prisoners and wounded at the battle of Char-Asiab, and also for forwarding to me a copy of the article in *The Fortnightly Review* for December, headed 'Martial Law in Cabul.' I think that a short explanation of what has really occurred since we entered Afghanistan last September will enable you to satisfy all those who may refer to the subject in Parliament that wounded Afghans have not been ill-treated, and that there is no foundation for the remarks made by Mr. Harrison in *The Fortnightly Review.* With regard to the burning of Afghan bodies at the battle of Char-Asiab, I would beg to say that I first heard of the circumstances from the newspapers, and that I at once directed a Court of Inquiry to investigate the matter, the proceedings of which have some time since been forwarded for the information of the Commander-in-Chief and Government of India. It would appear that the act was committed in the rear of the troops engaged by two or three Goorkhas who were by themselves, and by the evidence given life must have been as good as extinct at the time the clothes were set on fire. I need not assure you that no blame for the act in question can be attached to any officer of the force under my command, and that with this exception every consideration has been shown to the wounded and the dead, inasmuch as they have been treated as if they were our own soldiers, and after Char-Asiab some of the wounded Afghans were taken into hospital and placed alongside of our own wounded men. This fact, I think, speaks for itself as regards the general treatment of the Afghans who fought against us. With reference to martial law having been proclaimed within a radius of 10 miles round Cabul, I can safely affirm that for many reasons it was absolutely necessary to do so, the chief one being to prevent the inhabitants carrying firearms and other weapons which might render it possible for them to make sudden attacks on soldiers and other individuals belonging to this force. Had this precaution not been taken, I venture to say that, living as we are among a nation of fanatics, murders would have been of frequent occurrence. I am not at all in favour of martial law, and shall be glad to see it discontinued, as soon as some other form of government can be decided upon. As to the Proclamation published relative to the treatment of soldiers and others concerned in the attack on the Embassy and of those who had apparently shown themselves to be rebels against the Ameer by fighting against us, I would mention that at the time the Proclamation was issued Yakoob Khan was outwardly our friend, and repeatedly spoke to me of the people who fought against us at Char-Asiab as rebels to his rule; and on that account they were referred to in the terms of the Proclamation. As to men being hanged for the simple fact of their having fought against us, such was not the case. Rewards were certainly offered for their capture; but this was done with a view of arresting those who, directly or indirectly, had taken part in the massacre of the several members of the British Embassy. All convicted of such a crime would, I believe, have been sentenced to death in any country, whether civil or martial law had been in force. The Kotwal (chief magistrate of the city) was found guilty of having incited the troops to the massacre, of having taken an active part in dishonouring the dead bodies, and of having subsequently instigated the troops and people of Cabul to resist our advance. On these accounts he was hanged. As to prisoners taken in fight being shot, such is totally devoid of truth, further than in one or two instances summary punishment has been inflicted on individuals who have been found mutilating our wounded soldiers; indeed, all the wounded that have fallen into the enemy's hands at different times have been treated in the most cruel manner and horribly mutilated. With regard to the men who were not implicated in the attack on the Embassy, some short time after Yakoob Khan had been made a prisoner an amnesty was proclaimed, and the people of every district visited by our troops have invariably been informed that those soldiers have nothing to fear from us; but, on the other hand, if they came in and gave up their rifles or guns they would receive the amount authorized for the same. This was fully understood, and a considerable number of arms have from time to time been brought in. Recently, quite irrespective of any action taken by us, the Mollahs have been preaching a 'jehad,' or religious war, and have by these means got together by coercion, practical as well as religious, a gigantic collection of people. On reaching Cabul this mass was joined by all the riff-raff of the city and neighbouring villages; but the Kazilbashis, merchants, and respectable inhabitants, so far from throwing in their lot with our opponents, held aloof, and from time to time gave us valuable information. The greater portion also of the Sirdars of Cabul remained during the disturbances in our camp. As soon as I was aware that the enemy had been completely dispersed I published a general amnesty, feeling that the people generally were not to blame for what had occurred, and the quickest way of restoring order was to invite the people to Cabul and to let them see that they could trust implicitly to our forbearance and generosity. At the same time the Civil Dispensary was re-established, and notice was sent through the city and to all the neighbouring villages inviting the wounded to hospital and assuring them that they had nothing to fear. Many wounded have been brought in and are being taken every care of. Afghans are naturally very suspicious and require time to be re-assured; but so many Maliks and other headmen had responded to the Amnesty Proclamation that yesterday I was enabled to hold a Durbar at which nearly 200 of the principal men who had fought against us were present. Others will doubtless follow their example, and I hope in time the country will quiet down. Referring to the administration of affairs in the city and surroundings of Cabul, I can conscientiously say that our rule from the first has been extraordinarily mild and lenient. No harsh measure of any kind have been adopted. On the contrary, I have since had reason to regret that, from a desire not to do anything that could possibly set the people against us, I abstained, on our first occupation of Sherpur, from levelling the forts and enclosures by which it is surrounded on all sides, and which during the late siege, by affording shelter to the enemy, were the causes of much annoyance and some loss to us. Two proofs which to my mind are fairly conclusive as to the feelings of security and trust which the people of Cabul city and adjoining villages reposed in us are the rapid manner in which the city filled immediately the enemy dispersed, and the fact that since our arrival there had not been a single complaint against a European soldier, and only a few of a trivial nature against one or two men belonging to the Native regiments. The strictest discipline has been maintained, and there has not been an instance of violence against the people, notwithstanding that our soldiers have witnessed the cruel treatment of their comrades on every occasion of their falling into the enemy's hands. There is one point mentioned by Mr. Harrison in *The Fortnightly Review*—namely, that civilian special correspondents have been prevented from accompanying the force under my command—in answer to which I would like to say a few words. I certainly never received any orders prohibiting civilian correspondents accompanying the force, and from the first one has been in my camp. He had considerable difficulty in reaching Ali-khel before the force marched, as our movements were very rapid after the order for an advance on Cabul was received. This may have prevented other correspondents joining me at the time. Had any come they would have received every assistance. Some correspondents have arrived since we reached this. No restrictions whatever are placed on them, and they are allowed to send any telegrams they please, even when the information contained in them is incorrect, always excepting such information as by nature of its inaccuracy is calculated to produce an evil effect."

PERSIA AND HERAT.

OBSERVATIONS. QUESTION.

EARL GRANVILLE: My Lords, I regret having arrived in the House yesterday a few minutes too late to hear a statement made by the First Lord of the Treasury. The object of that statement appeared to be to correct a misapprehension which had arisen concerning an explanation he had given a day or two before in answer to a Question which I put to him. I should like now to ask him to be good enough to state what was the character of the misunderstanding which he desired to obviate. The two statements seem to have been the same, with the unimportant exception of the transposition of the two sentences. One was that there had been communications with Persia respecting the North-Eastern Frontier, about which it was premature to give information to the House; the other that no concession had been made to Persia with regard to the clause of the Treaty respecting her possession of Herat. I wish now to ask the noble Earl, Did the sentence mean merely that the concession had not yet been granted, or that such a concession would be contrary to the policy of Her Majesty's Government?

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD: My Lords, the misapprehension to which I referred was an impression, which I found somewhat general, that in the statement I originally made in this House in answer to the noble Earl, I stated that no communications had been made by Persia to Her Majesty's Government with respect to Herat. That, as your Lordships know, is not the case. I stated that we had not released Persia from her engagement not to occupy Herat; but, at the same time, I informed the House that there had been communications from Persia—and not infrequent communications — though they had led to no conclusion. As to the other inquiry of the noble Earl, he, who is himself so well acquainted with the conduct of public affairs, will, I feel sure, agree with me that these fragmentary allusions to negotiations still pending will only lead to further misunderstanding if I went beyond the absolute statement I have already made, that we have not released the Persian Government from their engagement not to occupy Herat.

COAL MINES—THE LEYCETT COLLIERY EXPLOSION.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

EARL DE LA WARR, in moving for the Report of the Inquiry into the Leycett Colliery Explosion, said, his object in doing so was that it might be placed in their Lordships' hands as soon as possible, the accident being of an unusually fatal character, resulting, he believed, in the loss of 61 lives, and attended by circumstances which seemed to render a strict inquiry specially necessary. He might also add that it was a case bearing very much upon the question now before their Lordships' House with regard to the liability of employers for injuries to their servants. It had been stated that another fatal explosion occurred in this mine so recently as September last, and that its dangers were so well known that safety-lamps of a peculiar construction were used; but, notwithstanding that fact, in the evidence given before the magistrates it appeared that the manager of the mine, though required by the Mines Regulation Act to exercise daily supervision, was absent for 10 days previous to the accident. Mr. Wynne, Government Inspector of Mines, said, at the examination before the magistrates—

> "He was present at the inquest and heard the defendant (the manager) state that he had not been into the Fair Lady pit (*i.e.*, where the accident happened) for 10 days prior to the explosion. It was very wrong for a manager to absent himself from the mine for so long a period as 10 days. In a pit like this, knowing they were driving into virgin ground, the defendant ought never to have missed more than one day, especially when he might have examined the place in an hour. . . . He was not justified in trusting to the contractor. A contractor ought not to act as underlooker. He was astonished when he saw the lower level that such a thing should have been done. If Mr. Stevenson had gone down the pit and seen what was being done, he (witness) did not believe he would have allowed it to go on. In fact, Mr. Stevenson said himself he did not know what was being done. Driving the level in the way they were doing, with the means of ventilation employed, rendered it almost impossible for the thing to go on without an explosion."

Such was the evidence given by the Government Inspector of Mines at the recent inquiry before the magistrates, which resulted in the conviction of the manager for not having exercised the control and supervision which the Act required. A full report of this terrible accident would doubtless appear in the usual Mining Reports; but as probably some time would elapse before they were presented, it was, he thought, very desirable that their Lordships should have, as early as possible, such information as could without inconvenience be given.

Moved, That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for Report of the inquiry into the Leycett Colliery explosion.—(*The Earl De La Warr.*)

EARL BEAUCHAMP said, that the noble Earl seemed to have confused one or two matters which should have been kept separate. He was sorry to say that, unfortunately, two accidents had occurred at this colliery—one on September 8, and the other on January 22 last. The noble Earl, in the reports which he had quoted, had referred to the accident that occurred on September 8. After that explosion an inquiry was held by the Government Inspector, and a Queen's Counsel, Mr. Wheelhouse, was employed to watch the proceedings on the part of the Government. The Inspector duly presented his Report to the Home Secretary, and subsequently proceedings were taken against the manager and two other persons concerned with the mine. One of the cases was dismissed, and in the other two fines were inflicted. In this explosion eight men lost their lives; but in the last explosion last month between 60 and 70 men were killed. In the last explosion the loss of life had been so serious that the inquest which had been held had been adjourned until the 18th instant; and up to the present time no Report of these proceedings had been received from the Inspector of Mines as to that accident. Under those circumstances, he was unable to comply with the request of the noble Earl, and, for the best of all reasons, that the Report had not yet been presented. He was not sure when the Report would be received; but Mr. Wheelhouse had been again instructed to watch the proceedings on the part of the Government until a verdict had been arrived at. It was impossible to say what steps would be taken. He could not produce the Report as to the first accident.

LORD ABERDARE asked whether it was not a fact that the manager who was now on his trial was one of the persons who was convicted of an offence arising out of the explosion of September?

EARL BEAUCHAMP said, he had no information on the subject.

On Question? *Resolved* in the *Negative.*

OFFICE OF REGISTRAR GENERAL—DR. FARR.

OBSERVATIONS. QUESTION.

THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN, in rising to ask a Question of which he had given Notice on this subject, said, his object was to ascertain if the Prime Minister would give an authoritative statement as to why Dr. Farr had been passed over in filling the appointment of Registrar General. Dr. Farr had been for many years employed in the office, and he believed that during the whole of that time he had fulfilled his duties with ability and devotion. He (the Marquess of Lothian) did not mean to imply that it was necessary that a person who had been long in an office should, when a vacancy occurred, be promoted to it; but there was a general tendency to believe that when a person had been so long in a Department, and was not promoted, there must be something against him. His (the Marquess of Lothian's) reason for asking this Question was that it had come to his knowledge that, certainly in Scotland, and to some extent in England also, an impression had arisen among the Medical Profession—an impression which he was sure was mistaken—that Dr. Farr had not been promoted only because he was a medical man. He was certain that, in appointing Sir Brydges Henniker to the vacant office, there had been no intention to throw any reflection on the Medical Profession, many individual members of which must be known to their Lordships as honourable men of great business capacity. He trusted the noble Earl at the head of the Government would not think him unreasonable in asking this Question, but would agree with him that it would be a great misfortune that any misapprehension which had arisen should be allowed to continue if it were possible to remove it. In conclusion, the noble Marquess asked the First Lord of the Treasury, with reference to the recent appointment to the office of Registrar General, Whether the long services of Dr. Farr had been taken into consideration; and whether he would state why Dr. Farr had not been selected as the successor of George Graham, Esquire, in that office?

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD: My Lords, I know nothing in the duties of a Minister more difficult than the distribution of patronage. It has fallen to my lot several times since I acceded to Office to exercise that function, and I can truly say that I never make an appointment of any kind without due regard to the interests of the Public Service. Now, with respect to this question, my noble Friend intimates that I have even incurred the ill-feeling of a learned and illustrious Profession, on whose skill most of your Lordships and I myself much depend. Generally speaking, however actuated one may be by a high sense of duty in the distribution of patronage, Questions are generally asked in Parliament in regard to it. Sometimes Votes of Censure are passed, and sometimes Votes of Censure are rescinded. In the present case of Dr. Farr, the original wish of the Government was to appoint him to the vacant office. I know Dr. Farr by reputation; his claims are obvious, his labours in his office have always been admitted; but I may add that they have been amply recognized by the State. But when I had to make those inquiries which were necessary before the appointment was made, such a representation was made to me as to the state of health of Dr. Farr that I shrank from the responsibility of appointing him to discharge such very arduous duties as the office to which my noble Friend has referred entails. I have here—I am unwilling to read it, and I shall not read it, though it is at the service of my noble Friend—an official document asking for a superannuation for Dr. Farr; and the statement as to his health which is made in that document, combined with the fact that he is now 72 years of age, is of that description that I feel confident none of your Lordships, on whichever side of the House you sit, would, after reading that document, authorize the appointment of Dr. Farr to the post in question. This is the ground, and the only ground, on which the Government acted as regards Dr. Farr; and as to supposing there was a prejudice on the part of the Government against the appointment of a medical man to the head of an office, the duties of which are intimately connected with the qualifications and acquisitions of the Medical Profession, I am sure your Lordships will, without a moment's hesitation, acquit me, or anyone occupying my position, of being influenced by such a feeling. After I found it to be out of my power to appoint Dr. Farr, the office was open for a considerable period. A great many names were mentioned; and the gentleman who now fills the office received the appointment because I believed, on the whole, that he was the most competent to perform its duties. I had no personal acquaintance with him; but he was the one who, to my mind, gave the best promise of the ability to fulfil duties which are of the greatest importance, and which certainly require health and vigour for their performance, particularly at this moment, when preparations are making for taking a new Census of the country.

House adjourned at a quarter before
Six o'clock, to Monday next,
Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 13th February, 1880.

MINUTES.]—New Members Sworn—Samuel Danks Waddy, esquire, *for* Sheffield; Viscount Lymington, *for* Barnstaple.

Public Bills—*Ordered—First Reading*—Alkali Acts Amendment, &c.* [74]; Poor Law Guardians (Ireland) (Ministers of Religion)* [75].

Committee—Seed Potatoes (Ireland) (*re-comm.*) [68]—R.P.

Committee — Report — Companies Acts Amendment* [52].

Third Reading—Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement (Scotland) Act (1875) Amendment* [5], and *passed.*

QUESTIONS.

CYPRUS — THE ORDINANCE SUPERSEDING THE EXTRA-TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION OF FOREIGN CONSULS.

Sir CHARLES W. DILKE asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether Her Majesty's Government can now lay before the House the correspondence with Foreign Powers with regard to the ordinance under which extra-territorial jurisdiction of Foreign Consuls in Cyprus under the Capitulations is superseded, and Lord Salisbury's Despatch to Lord Lyons, No. 57, of the 16th of January 1879, which states the grounds on which the Government consider that the continuance of this Consular jurisdiction should not be permitted?

Mr. BOURKE: I have had an opportunity of consulting my noble Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs with reference to the Question of the hon. Baronet, and he is of opinion that it would not be expedient at present to lay before the House the Correspondence to which the hon. Baronet refers.

RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND).

MR. DILLWYN (for Mr. CHAMBERLAIN) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If he will lay upon the Table of the House the Correspondence, recently referred to by him, in which the Government warned boards of guardians to provide stores of food and fuel, with Copies of any Replies received to this Communication?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, I have to say that there is no Correspondence to produce. What I stated was that instructions had been given by the Irish Government to the Local Government Board and the Inspectors of the Local Government Board that they should take care that proper steps were taken for the purpose to which the Question refers. I alluded to a passage in a private letter from the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to one of his Colleagues with regard to the steps so taken, and I did so for the purpose of showing that as early as the date of that letter we had the subject before us; but there is no Correspondence which can be laid before the House.

EAST COAST OF AFRICA—ZANZIBAR—SLAVERY.

MR. ANDERSON asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, If he is responsible for a Return, numbered 381, on the subject of "Slave Vessels and Slaves," distributed to Members a few days ago; and, if so, why that Return has been presented to Parliament with a most important part of the information ordered by the House absent from it? He might explain that an amended Return had been placed in the hands of hon. Members that morning; and he wished to ask whether the information contained in it was all the information which the right hon. Gentleman was able to give? For instance, it referred to the deportation of Natives of Zanzibar and other places, and he wished to know whether they had been set to work as free labourers or under some indenture system; and, in the latter case, whether any regulations had been framed by the Treasury as provided by the Act?

MR. W. H. SMITH, in reply, regretted that the Return had been sent out in an incomplete form through the mistake of a clerk whose duty it was to prepare it; but all the additional information which was in the hands of the Government was contained in the Paper distributed this morning. He was not in a position just now to answer the further Question which the hon. Gentleman had asked.

NAVAL DISCIPLINE BILL.

MR. MACDONALD asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, If the Bill promised last year on Navy Discipline is to be introduced this Session; whether he has issued any instruction as to the use of the cat or flogging in the Navy; and, if he will lay a Copy of such instructions upon the Table of the House?

MR. W. H. SMITH, in reply, said, it was not intended to amend or to consolidate the law relating to Navy discipline this Session. Other Business before the House would prevent that being done. If the hon. Member would move for a Copy of the Instructions issued in July last as to the use of the cat in the Navy there would be no objection to produce them.

ARMY—SOUTH AFRICA—NATAL AND THE TRANSVAAL—ALLEGED MISCONDUCT OF BRITISH TROOPS.

MR. A. MILLS asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether any information has been received by the Government respecting the breaches of discipline stated in the public newspapers to have been committed by British Troops in Natal and the Transvaal?

MR. J. HOLMS also asked, Whether attention has been called to a letter in the "Daily Telegraph" of the 10th inst. signed William Howard Russell, containing grave charges against troops serving in South Africa; and, whether he has taken steps to investigate these charges; and, if so, will he state what these steps are, and when he will be able to communicate the result to the House?

COLONEL STANLEY: In answer to the two Questions which have been addressed to me by hon. Gentlemen, I have to say that Mr. Russell's letter to *The Daily Telegraph* of the 10th instant is an amplification of that published on the 21st of November last. When the letter of the 21st of November last appeared a communication was immediately addressed to the General Officer commanding Natal—Sir Garnet Wolseley—on the subject, and a telegraphic reply was received from him on the 8th of January, in which Mr. Russell's statements were stigmatized as "gross exaggerations" and "transparent untruths." Since then Sir Garnet Wolseley has addressed a confirmatory letter to me, dated January 2, acknowledging the receipt of the copy of *The Daily Telegraph* of the 21st of November, and asserting

> "That the statements therein contained grossly exaggerate any act of disorder which may have been committed."

He also states that, in order to inform the War Department exactly what truth and what falsehood there is in the statements of the Special Correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph*, he has

> "Desired that the Landdrost and the magistrates in the several districts in the Transvaal and Natal in which Her Majesty's troops have been quartered should report specifically on the various assertions referred to."

In answer to a telegram since addressed to him, Sir Garnet Wolseley telegraphs from Pietermaritzburg this morning to say that his report on Mr. Russell's charges was sent to me on the 16th ultimo, and that other reports follow. I suppose, therefore, that I may receive it by next mail; but it has not arrived yet.

RIVERS CONSERVANCY BILL—LEGISLATION.

Mr. ARTHUR PEEL asked the President of the Local Government Board, When he proposes to re-introduce the Rivers Conservancy Bill of last Session?

Mr. SCLATER-BOOTH, in reply, said, Her Majesty's Government were of opinion that it would not be expedient to introduce it during the present Session.

RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND).

The O'DONOGHUE asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, If he will lay upon the Table, on as early day as possible, a Return giving the names of those landlords who have applied for loans in anticipation of the passing of the Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill, the names of those to whom advances have already been made, and the locality where their property is situated; and, whether he will suspend the giving of further advances to landlords till the Bill has received the sanction of Parliament?

Mr. J. LOWTHER: A Return containing the information which the hon. Member asks for was ordered on Tuesday last by the House, and will, I hope, be in the hands of Members shortly. I may remark that the Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill having received the unanimous approval of the House on the second reading last night, I shall not feel justified in entertaining any doubts as to its receiving the sanction of Parliament, nor in any way suspending the action that has already been taken in giving advances to landlords.

PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—SUPPLY.

Mr. DILLWYN asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether it is intended to take Supply on Monday next; and, if so, what Estimates will be taken?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER, in reply, said, he apprehended that it would be impossible to take Supply on Monday, as they would have to make progress with the Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill.

AFGHAN WAR—ALLEGED SEVERITIES AT CABUL—EXPLANATION OF GENERAL ROBERTS.—OBSERVATIONS.

Mr. E. STANHOPE: Sir, it will be in the recollection of the House that a good many Questions have been addressed to the Government since the opening of the Session with reference to certain executions at Cabul, and that the Government promised to give the House, at the earliest possible moment, any information which they might receive on the subject. On the 5th of December last, shortly after the reports appeared in the newspapers, I addressed a letter to General Sir Frederick Roberts, and I inclosed in that letter a copy of an article, which many hon. Members will have seen, and which appeared in the December number of *The Fortnightly Review*. In answer to that communication I have to-day received a letter from General Roberts; and although it is rather long, I hope that I shall have the permission of the House to read it now to them. It is dated Cabul, January 10, 1880.—[See Lords' Report, page 579.]

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE: I wish to ask the hon. Gentleman, Whether the letter from Sir Frederick Roberts is the detailed statement to which he alluded on Friday as being on its way home; and, if so, whether it is accompanied by any list of the 100 persons who were stated to have been executed at Cabul, with the charges against them and the findings of the Court?

MR. E. STANHOPE: As I said, the letter I have read is an answer to one I addressed to Sir Frederick Roberts. A detailed statement is, undoubtedly, on its way home.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

INDIA—POPULAR REPRESENTATION.

OBSERVATIONS.

SIR DAVID WEDDERBURN, in rising to call attention to the importance of conferring upon the people of India some measure of representation, either in the Legislative Councils, or otherwise, in order that the Indian Government may have greater facilities than those at present existing for ascertaining Native opinion upon public questions, said, he brought forward the question in redemption of a promise he had made, that if ever he again had a seat in the House he would lay it before Parliament. Last year he had no opportunity; but this Session had been more fortunate, and he was seeking now to redeem his pledge. He would not endeavour at that moment to extract a promise from the Government; nor did he intend to take the opinion of the House on the question. He should also wish in every way to deprecate Party bias, for he had, at every opportunity, asserted to the people of India that they had good and sincere friends on both sides of the House. At one time it appeared to him that a fair method of conferring representation upon the people of India would be to confer upon a few of the great centres of population in that country the privilege of sending Representatives or Delegates to that House; but although that method had, doubtless, a good deal to recommend it, it was beset with many peculiar difficulties; and, upon mature reflection, it appeared to him that the most practical method would be to have representative Native Members in the Legislative Councils of India. It was, after all, these Legislative Councils—which must not be confounded with the Executive Councils—that made the laws under which India was governed. At present these Councils were of such a nature that the representative element was excluded from them; and although the Native element was not entirely excluded the Natives were not elected by the people. Perhaps he might be permitted to state briefly what the constitution of the Legislative Council of Bombay was. It consisted of 13 Members. Of these there were nine officials, eight of them being Europeans, and comprising the Governor, the Commander-in-Chief, two of the Members of the Executive Council, the Chief Secretary to the Government, the Advocate General, and two Heads of Departments. These, with one other gentleman, constituted the European element. There were also four Natives, one of whom was a Native official. Of course, a Council so composed could not be regarded in any way as representative. Nevertheless, the non-official Members expressed their opinions, and occasionally an interesting and instructive debate arose. He held in his hand a Report of a meeting of the Bombay Legislative Council which took place in April last. Nine Members were present, two of whom were Native non-official Members. The debate was a long one, and the Native gentlemen, who took a very active part, stated a great many important facts in regard to the opinion of their countrymen on the question before the Council, which was that of irrigation. They moved as many as seven Amendments; but he regretted to say that, owing to the great preponderance of the official element, they met with no support, and every one of them was lost. Indeed, they were only supported by the Native unofficial Members. He could not help thinking that if there had been a few more of the same class in the Council the debate would have been more valuable and instructive, and that some of the Amendments incorporating the

Native view would have been adopted. On the other hand, he would cite the case of the Municipality of Bombay, where the representative principle had been thoroughly adopted. The Corporation of Bombay was, he believed, most popularly constituted, and consisted of 64 Members. Of these, 16 were nominated by the Government, 16 were elected by the Bench of Justices, and the remaining 32 were elected by the ratepayers who paid above a certain sum in direct taxation. Both Europeans and Natives were fully eligible to be elected upon the Corporation; but the affairs generally were in the hands of the Town Council, which was composed of 12 members nominated or elected from among the members of the Corporation. The power of initiating as well as of executing the decisions of the municipality was in the hands of the Municipal Commissioner. There were two classes of municipality—one known as the City Municipality, and the other as the Town Municipality. These two classes together had control and management of revenues, which amounted to a total of nearly £2,000,000. In Bombay, where the municipal constitution was more popular than in any other part of India, he had the highest authority for stating that the system had worked admirably well. A late Municipal Commissioner assured him that he only observed one failing in the working of the system, and that was a tendency to abstention on the part of the electors from voting — a failing, however, which would, doubtless, be cured by the lapse of time, and as the people became more accustomed to the arrangement. Two successive Governors of Bombay—the only two under whom this municipality had existed—had spoken in very high terms of its influence for good. Sir Richard Temple, in particular, said that in Bombay the municipal institutions would never fail, knowing, as he did, the public spirit and self-sacrificing spirit of the Members. In the case of these corporations and municipalities, it seemed to him (Sir David Wedderburn) that there already existed constituencies which might be made use of in extending this sort of representation to the Legislative Councils, and they might be fairly intrusted with the duty of electing a certain number of representatives. One of the principles of the Government of India Bill of 1858, as introduced by the present Prime Minister, was to give Representatives to the principal centres of population. Under that Bill, it was proposed to have in the India Council five Representatives elected by the principal cities of the United Kingdom, and in the same spirit an arrangement might be made to give two Members to each of the Presidencies, and to some of the principal cities of the Empire. He thought the criticism and opinions of Members so elected would be of the utmost value on questions of finance when the Budget was submitted each year. He might quote many authorities for the belief that in matters of finance they ought to have authoritative expression of the feelings and wishes of the Natives. Sir Bartle Frere had drawn up with considerable elaboration a complete system of representation, with Local Councils, Municipal Councils, and arrangements for electing Members to send to the Legislative Council. After explaining the system at considerable length, Sir Bartle Frere went on to say that—

> "If two elected Members were sent up from each of the Provincial centres — of which I propose to make five altogether—to the Local Legislative Council, they would in every way greatly strengthen the Council, and give additional weight to its proceedings."

A Commissioner of the Punjaub, in a letter to *The Times*, pointed out that the conviction was deeply implanted in the mind of every Native of India who thought at all on the subject, that if the principle of representation in the Legislative Councils was fairly conceded, it would tend, in regard to expenditure, to introduce a more healthy tone than at present existed. A very learned and distinguished Native, speaking on the subject, said the Natives were prepared to understand the general working of the representative system; and he declared that double the amount of the deficit might be raised by the Natives if their prejudices were not affected, and if the taxation were arranged in a way more consistent with their feelings. In this way, he (Sir David Wedderburn) certainly thought the Government would find their hands greatly strengthened by the establishment of the representative system. Throughout India the people were fully alive to the difficulties under which the Rulers of that country laboured, and their inability to understand and realize the feelings and requirements of those whom they were called on to govern. It was upon this practical difficulty, rather than upon any abstract question of justice to the taxpayers, that he would base the plea of giving them, without loss of time, representation in some modified form. The authorities on the subject whom he could quote were of the very highest class. Lord Minto, the Governor General of India, so long ago as the year 1807, spoke of the mutual ignorance of each other's motives, intentions, and acts in which Europeans and Natives were contented to live. According to Lord Minto, the chief impediment to the improvement of the Native races, and the chief disadvantage under which their European rulers laboured, was to be found in ignorance of each other's language and modes of thought. One of the first objects of the Government should be to assist them to understand each other. Another Governor General, Lord Mayo, said there were large districts in which men of sufficient ability and intelligence were willing to assist the Government, and what was wanted was to recognize that the principle of associating with each other whenever it was possible was for the interests of the country. Lord Mayo had also given an opinion on the subject that wherever possible the Natives should be consulted. Those were two Governors General belonging to opposite Parties; but in respect of their opinion as to the Natives of India in the conduct of affairs they were completely unanimous, as would be found in the case of nearly all the great Rulers of India. He should not attempt to sketch a scheme for the Government as to the mode of election further than to say that, to some extent, arrangements seemed to have been made already for such a purpose. The hon. Member concluded by quoting a passage from an address by Sir Charles Turner, Chief Justice of Madras, when presiding over the anniversary meeting at Presidency College, Madras, favourable to the principle of consultation with the Natives, and the raising of their condition to the stage which would enable them to take part in the responsibilities of government. He impressed upon the House and the Government that the time seemed to have come when, at least, they might make a commencement by conferring the privileges he had indicated. There were Natives who had shown their complete power to appreciate what had been done for them in the use of the powers of self-government, and he thought the time had come for a wider extension of those privileges. As he had before intimated, he would not ask the House to express its opinion on the Resolution; but he hoped the Government would give that due attention to the subject which it deserved.

MR. E. STANHOPE said, that there was no question that representative institutions were dear to all Englishmen, and that they were all desirous of extending such institutions wherever it was possible to do so; but when they came to the case of India they had to remember what India was. It was not a country of one people, but a conglomeration of many peoples, differing in caste and religion, and having no cohesion whatever. Indeed, the only possible unit was the unit of the family. Therefore, as a basis of representation was altogether wanting, it would be impossible, taking India as a whole, at any rate for many years, to extend representative institutions to that country. Still, when people could be congregated in large masses, the case might be different; and there were municipalities in India, like that of Bombay, which were cases in point. In such instances the Natives had become associated with Europeans; they had become accustomed to European ideas, and had, so to speak, been educated into a condition which was pretty nearly ripe for some sort of self-government. He ventured to say that, so far as it was possible to extend their representative institutions, the Government of India, in what it had done of late years, was endeavouring to do so. That they would be glad to extend it further there could be no doubt whatever; because every extension of that principle tended to diminish the responsibility they themselves had to bear. He had been looking into the matter of municipalities, and found that there were 894, and within the limits of those governing bodies there were 12,000,000 people who were governed by them, and those bodies contained no less than three Natives to every one European. In a large number of cases the Natives were elected, and they did good work. In the Presidency towns there was also a large proportion of Native Members in the municipal bodies. No doubt, those towns had come to partake very much more of a European character, the people being brought together, being engaged in common pursuits, and he thought the Natives had not shown much interest by voting, yet they selected good members who were zealous for the prosperity of the places in which they were resident. He believed in one case—that of Lucknow — only seven voters came to the poll. In Bombay, which town was the most favourable instance in India, it could not be said that a great number of the electors came forward to the poll; but it was said that, on the whole, they did elect good men, and those men undoubtedly did very good work in the Government. But when they went beyond those large populations, when they went outside those Presidency towns and other municipalities, they got to people who were governed by the headmen of their villages, who did not know anything about Councils, and were pretty well content to be let alone, so long as they were not too much taxed. The great object the Government must bear in mind, therefore, for many years to come was this—that although they could not hope to introduce generally representative institutions in India, they should endeavour by every means in their power to get at the real feeling of the people of the country. One of the steps always taken for that purpose was this—whenever a Bill altering the law was brought in, it was published, translated into the Native languages, sent to the different Local Governments, and distributed to the district officers, who received instructions to elicit the Native feeling on the subject of the measure. A great step in advance was taken by the East India Council Act of 1861, by which it was provided that there should be official and non-official Members in each of the Legislative Councils. The Act did not say anything about the non-official Members being Natives; but, as a matter of fact, a large proportion of them were Natives. In the Legislative Council of Madras, out of seven non-official Members four were Natives. In the Legislative Council of Bombay, out of six non-official Members four were Natives; and in Bengal, out of seven non-official Members, five were Natives. In the Legislative Council of the Governor General for India, out of seven non-official Members four were Natives, so that it might be said among the non-officials the Natives were very well represented. The hon. Member had made a suggestion—and it was the only practical suggestion he had made—that the municipal bodies should send representatives to the Legislative Councils. Well, he ventured to say at once that that was a proposition which was worthy of consideration. It was one he knew that had frequently been brought under the attention of the authorities in India, and it was one that he should not for a moment think of condemning; but, at the same time, there were certain practical difficulties that occurred to one in the way of carrying the proposal out. Very often the chairman of the municipal bodies in the Presidency towns was already a Member of the Legislative Council, and in that capacity had an opportunity of expressing the views of those over whom he presided. But if they were to adopt the suggestion of the hon. Member, he was not quite sure they would attain all they desired to attain. On the one hand, there would be great difficulty in selecting. If they chose the most prominent men they were likely to have a Europeanized Native who would not represent the Native ideas. They would have a man with European ideas, but without sympathy with the great mass of the population. He would look at things with European rather than with Native eyes. On the other hand, if it were attempted to elect a simple Native, one or two practical difficulties presented themselves. He understood it was very often found that a Native selected in that way had the very greatest possible dislike to being called upon to leave the place where he was residing and to go to live in the Presidency towns. It was a change of climate which he disliked to make; and when he went to take a seat in the Council with the Governor General or with the Provincial Governor there was something a little abhorrent to the Native mind in opposing the authority of the Government; and when the Governor General said one thing the Native had the greatest possible difficulty in not saying that he agreed with him. In course of time that attitude of the Natives changed; he found that his opinion was invited, and after a time such Natives were found very useful men for the purpose of consultation. To that extent the Government had already gone; further than that he doubted whether they could safely go. They would proceed in this matter, undoubtedly, by tentative steps. There were some who thought the Government had already proceeded too far. At any rate, they were careful not to press the matter beyond the point they thought they could reasonably aim at; and it must be recollected that the Natives in India, unlike those in many other countries, had freedom of speech and meeting, and, so long as they did not use decidedly seditious language, had perfect freedom of the Press, and they had thus many ways of making their views known to the Government. Therefore, he thought the hon. Member had exercised a very wise discretion in only throwing the subject out for discussion in the House, and not pressing his Resolution; but his suggestions, like all others that might be made by the House, would receive the careful attention of his Colleagues and himself.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL said, that although it would be very desirable to have the assistance of Natives in the administration, yet he was very much in doubt whether we had it in our power to get at the real feeling of the people. At all events, he could see difficulties in the way of a formidable character. Educated Natives were very much apt to caricature European ideas and to exaggerate the notions of freedom. He thought, as a rule, that those opinions were not the real opinions of the Natives. That applied to the Presidency towns, and he had no doubt it applied to other places. There was no part of India which contained more energetic people than the Punjab; but their representations were too frequently only the opinions of a very clever and active gentleman—a German Jew—who had set himself up at Lahore. In that respect it was really the case that they might be very much misled if opinion was represented more largely than it at present was by the class to which he alluded—the more educated and Europeanized Natives. However, there was room for improvement. He thought better representatives of the Natives might be found for the Council of the Governor General; but as regarded the local Councils of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, the Native Members were very active and very practical men, and they really exercised very considerable influence in the Council. So far it could not be said that the Native opinion was not to some degree represented. Then they came to the question of Native assistance in the government of the country. He himself had been educated in the school of paternal despotism; and he supposed that when there was a paternal despotism exercised by persons without prejudice, and who were under some control as to their action, that Government had many merits. But, on the other hand, the more they had experience of paternal despotism, the more he felt that it had its limits—the hand of the paternal despot could not be everywhere and do everything. In the course of ages they might have to hand over the government of the country to the people of India; and it was very desirable, therefore, he thought, that in anticipation of the change some preparation should be made in the way of the establishment of local self-governing institutions of a representative character—such institutions as were shown to have existed in the course of Indian history. Those institutions were existing in the Punjab when Alexander invaded it, and they were still to be found in some villages and towns. What he complained of was that they had not cherished those institutions as they might have done. The Mahomedan polity was of a democratic character, placing before all other principles the equality of man; and the old Hindoo States partook, to a great extent, of the character of European States some centuries ago, their Rulers not being absolutely free from the control exercised by their knights and foremost warriors. It seemed to him they might do a great deal in the way of recognizing and improving those popular institutions of the country which had existed until they were suppressed by our law. It was quite true that those institutions had developed a great many abuses, and a good many objections could be raised to them; and it was, no doubt, upon that account that by introducing their law and methods they thought they were making an improvement. Well, he thought they were wrong. Foreigners as they were, he did not think they had it in their power completely and thoroughly to administer the country in the way in which they desired; and he would much rather have imperfect local self-acting institutions, even if there were some imperfections, than attempt to govern by machinery stretched too far and attempting to do everything. A great many of the towns in India were administered by Municipalities, and many of the Natives of those places were intelligent and capable of managing their own affairs. As regarded the great Muincipalities of Calcutta and Bombay, his impression was that the administration had not been very successful; up to a certain point he had thought it better to avoid any direct representation, and since that had been granted the elected members had not always been of the best character. As far as local institutions were concerned, their success had been tolerably good when tried upon a small scale; and when they were found to be unsatisfactory when tried on a large scale, surely it was their duty not to begin from above and to go downwards, but to begin at the bottom and gradually creep upwards. He believed they had in India the germ of institutions of a very superior kind. In the villages they could obtain a self-governing body, and in that respect there was a good work to be done by the Natives in India. The sphere of self-government might be gradually enlarged. Of late years the Natives in many districts had made their own rates, and provided themselves with roads and schools and introduced various modern appliances by means of local and district bodies; and what should be said to them was that there was no desire to take more money from them, but to give them greater facilities for raising money for themselves and further improving their districts. In several parts of the country with which he was acquainted the Natives gave an earnest of still further success; and, consequently, there was every reason to hope that the wishes expressed by his hon. Friend (Sir David Wedderburn) might be gradually realized in the future. It was absolutely necessary, however, that they should look to the whole of the people, and not to a small section. They might obtain their representatives from the richer class entirely; but if that were the case, it would, undoubtedly, be a great misfortune: therefore, great care should be taken. What he desired to see was a representation by which the real body of the people were represented, and where justice might be done by all classes; and in that respect he hoped, from time to time, they would take a step in advance.

COMMERCE AND FREE TRADE.

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

MR. WHEELHOUSE rose to move for a Select Committee—

> "To consider the Commercial Relations at present existing between England and Foreign Nations, especially with regard to the import of Manufactured Goods from Abroad, as well as the effect caused by our system of one-sided so-called Free Trade, with a view (if possible) of ameliorating the position of the wage classes of this Country,"

saying that no one could be more alive to the grave interests involved in the subjects to which he was about to draw attention than himself, for, living among commercial communities for a long time, and then having had the honour of representing for now upwards of 10 years one of the largest and most important mercantile constituencies in England, it had been his duty and pleasure for many years to consider what could best serve the interests of those great commercial communities, and to study their wants and requirements. His only regret had been that he could not introduce the subject earlier, because he felt that, so long as the dark cloud of national distress was overhanging their own horizon, it might have been charged against him that he was endeavouring to seize something like an unfair advantage of a state of affairs that he, in common alike with employer and employed, could not but too deeply deplore. In his opinion, the so-called principles introduced into the country and carried out under the name of Free Trade had been clearly proved to be productive of unlimited evil. He might say, in the outset, that no one would have, in all probability, been a greater Freetrader than himself, had he been able to obtain real Free Trade—that was, freedom of trade between all the nations of the earth. But, in the very inception of this movement, he was one of those who knew that such an idea was merely visionary. He no more believed in universal Free Trade than he did in universal peace, however ardently he might desire them; he knew but too well that they were, in fact, each equally unattainable. The late Mr. Cobden, to whom he had pointed out the possibility of other nations not following our example, and the very grave danger of foreign countries finding it to their interest some day to repudiate Free Trade principles, replied—"Well, at all events, Free Trade will last my time, and probably yours." To that observation, he (Mr. Wheelhouse) then replied—as respectfully as he could—that such a remark was not an argument, and there, for a time, the matter ended. But the evil he had feared and foreseen had come upon us. The foreigner, now that he had obtained our machinery, our coal, and our skilled labour, had raised up a barrier against our manufacturers. As long as he required our goods as models and patterns, he was glad enough to admit them into his country duty free; but now that he was able to make them for himself, he laughed at the doctrines of Free Trade and excluded our goods from his markets. Thus, while years ago we were the great exporting country of the world for all hand or machine made articles, for the last 10 years our manufacturing trade had been going from bad to worse, and we had now altogether been deprived of our prestige. Even in our own country we had lost the command of the market. Our watches came from Switzerland, our cambrics and silks from France, and our velvets from Germany. All these articles we admitted duty free, while we ourselves were met by prohibitory tariffs almost everywhere abroad. The results upon the industries of this country had been most disastrous. Where now was Spitalfields as an industrial community? The silk trade of Coventry and Macclesfield had been utterly destroyed. It was, perhaps, a grim satisfaction to those who supported these so-called Free Trade doctrines to learn that while the nails came from Belgium our coffins came from abroad also. The effect of this system upon our wage-earning classes had been to deprive them of millions of money. Look at the condition of the once great sugar industry of the East of London, which formerly gave employment to some 50,000 persons. It was now utterly ruined in consequence of the bounties given by foreign nations upon the export of manufactured sugar, and because the Government would not, as it might, impose any countervailing duty upon the article. Not only had Free Trade handicapped the workmen of this country, but it allowed salesmen and shopkeepers everywhere out of Great Britain to extract from the wage-pockets of our people means and money to any extent. There was no use in saying, as had been said, that England could stand against anything in the shape of the manufactures of foreign lands. The broad patent fact was that she was not standing against them. Instead of holding our own, our trade was day by day falling off. Every man almost who lived by labour was calling out loudly and justly that he was unfairly dealt with by the legislation which had taken place on this subject. They were told, 35 years ago, that the principles by which the Government of that day was guided were correct; but that was a ruinous error. It had proved to be fallacious; and were they, he asked, to go on watching their own ruin and seeing their trade cut up to nothing in all directions? He did not expect, nor was it reasonable for any Government to suppose, that any class in this country would submit to needless deprivation because an Administration chose to insist upon a fallacy commercially considered. If this were a small question —a question of a moment—a question of bad times, one which might be remedied hereafter, he could understand that it might be well to wait a while longer, even yet, and see whether—although the hope had by this time become Micawberlike — something might not turn up; but he believed they could not afford to wait, and the time was coming apace when every single individual handicraft carried on in the country would be taken from us. While, on the one hand, he was not prepared to deny that, possibly, some part of the vast development of British trade might be attributable to her commercial legislation, it still remained an open question whether that development would not have been safer to the best interests of the country, on the former lines of our national policy, even though it should have been slower in its operation; and he ventured to assert, notwithstanding a statement recently published over the name of a right hon. Gentleman of high authority in this House and in the country generally, that it was by no means so clearly proved as he considered it to be that our national development was wholly, or even nearly wholly, attributable either to so-called Free Trade, or our railway system. Thousands of causes, with which neither the one nor the other had any concern, had united to promote, not only her development, but that of the world at large, and it was very difficult to fix the relative proportions of those several agencies. Progress must and would be continuous. While some English writers were unceasingly insisting *ad nauseam* that the entire edifice of our national commerce was the result of so-called Free Trade exclusively, on the other hand the Americans — if we followed Mr. Welsh in his very able reasoning—had demolished that theory as utterly illusory, alleging that the "development" of their commercial prosperity had far exceeded ours, though carried out on the lines of a strict protection. America was beating us in cotton cloths, for she had her cotton close at hand; she had put a duty of 50 per cent, therefore one practically prohibitive, against our cotton goods; and great mills, such as those which were to be found in England, were now to be seen at the other side of the Atlantic. A premium was thus given to foreign manufactures which enabled them to beat us not only in our own, but in foreign markets; and, seeing this, he said that it was time to hark back upon the lines on which our legislation had proceeded. But it was alleged that it was impossible to go back in the case of certain principles, and to a very limited extent that was true; but with respect to commercial matters and to dealing equitably with other countries, they could go back from lines which had proved to be fallacious. Russia saw she had gone a little too far, and had given away advantages unduly, and she retraced her steps at once. So also did Prussia and many other countries, as well as Canada. American statesmen were astute enough to know their own interests. They knew that their protective duties, policy, and legislation had made their country what it was. In this pamphlet recently published, Mr. Welsh said that while England prided herself on her manufacturing power and expansive trade, America had raised her trade from $22,000,000 to more than $118,000,000. If, therefore, we were on the right track, it was a wonderful thing that America should thus be able to outstep, and soon, possibly, to overwhelm us. The question was a very grave one. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham stated not long since that our trade amounted to £600,000,000; but he ought to have added that of that sum no less than £450,000,000 consisted of imports. The question was really one between imports and exports, and in considering the subject it should not be forgotten that our imports greatly exceeded our exports. Within the last few years the whole phase of matters had undergone a serious change. Take France as an example; while, even so lately as 1874, our imports from that country were just under £3,000,000, our exports were £3,700,000, not very far from equal. But, in 1878, four years later, the tables were wholly turned against us; our imports being close upon £4,000,000, while our exports had dwindled down to something less than £3,000,000. But he did not wish to confine the observation to France. Taken as a whole, our imports to this country for 1878 — the last available "Return"—showed to be to the value of upwards of £368,000,000, while our exports—even including our foreign and colonial trade—only amounted to something less than £250,000,000, thus leaving a balance against Great Britain of no less than £118,000,000. When the House came to consider that this enormous sum represented, what ought to be, for the most part, the wages of our British working population—because the price of raw materials formed comparatively but a small item in the purchase—the dead loss and everlasting drain upon our national purse and resources, in favour of the foreign artificer, were something almost incredible. And what was the consequence arising out of all this? English manufacturers were building mills and investing capital in foreign countries, since they got the necessary labour cheaper, and could produce their goods from looms in Suabia and Silesia at a less cost than they could make them here. At that very moment, he knew of one large firm which was packing up its business and taking its machinery abroad, because it could obtain the means of production cheaper there than in this country. Again, it must be remembered that the shopkeeper or salesman here never inquired where the article he wanted or bought was manufactured—with him it must always necessarily be a mere question of price. "How much?" settled that matter at the first instant of the negotiations; and, of course, in that sense of the word, it was impossible that patriotism could ever enter into trade. But when this happened, as it did now every day, British capital thus employed went to the benefit of the foreign artizan, and the wage-earning classes of this country suffered in a proportionate ratio. He had mentioned some trades which had suffered greatly, and he could name many others. The velvet trade was almost gone; so also was that of lath-rending, owing to the great imports from Sweden at a price less than that at which laths could be obtained in this country. England received, duty free, ships, foreign-made locomotives, implements, furniture, flowers, carpets, clocks, and innumerable other articles, a list of which he held in his hand, but through which it would be wearisome to travel entirely. The timber trade was fast going—not the raw material, to the import of which he had no objection—but the manufactured articles. In fact, no one who saw the mass of correspondence which had poured in upon him since he gave Notice of the present Motion could doubt that this so-called Free Trade had injuriously affected almost every industry in the country. It was not a matter as to what was best, but it was a question of what they could actually get—what they could save—because that there was a tendency to wreck and to ruin was beyond all doubt. That the shopkeepers of London and the country would feel the pressure in time was certain. They might not feel it now—to-day, or to-morrow—but it was following fast on the sufferings of the wage-earning classes during the last four or five years. Men had been speaking of commercial depression, attributing it to all sorts of notions and ideas except the correct one. They had been talking of the glut of the markets. But although there might be a glut lasting over a few weeks or months, it could not—as had been the case—be attributable to that. It was the endless stream of foreign-made goods and commodities which were now being forced upon us. There might have been glut of the markets; but how was that glut produced? In this way—America and Europe had sent their surplus manufactures into England, in the hope that at least they would realize a fair price for them, and to foreigners a fair price was very often less than the sum for which the handicapped British labourer could produce the article. There might be a glut every now and again; but a glut in the market never lasted for four or five years. The glut did not come from their own manufacturers; it came because the English people were willing to buy articles which were sent here from abroad, and, because they could not consume all that was sent, came the glut. If there were a fair and equitable tariff—equal, say, to that of America upon cotton goods—then the working men of this country, notwithstanding the shorter hours of labour, would have been able to hold their own. But, as the matter stood, it was impossible. He had yet to learn why, with reference to foreign-made articles, the wage-earning classes in this country ought not to be put on a level with the same classes in foreign lands so far as the fiscal regulations of this country would allow it. If we put on a duty which was equivalent to the Revenue charge in another country, that country could not complain of our so doing; and it was idle to say, if that were done, we should make the article dearer to the so-called consumer. A greater fallacy than that was never propounded. It must always be remembered that the producer and consumer were often the same people, or so closely allied as to be virtually the same. An article was only cheap according as it was wanted, and as there were the means wherewith to purchase it. It was no use offering a 4*d.* loaf for 3½*d.*, if a man only received 2*d.* wages with which to buy it. He maintained it was time some such Committee as that which he asked for was given. He did not wish to trouble the House further with statistics; but hon. Members might rely upon this, a cry would be raised all over the country on the subject. An attempt might be made, and for a time, possibly, successfully made, to stifle that cry; but although it might be but a murmur now, it might hereafter be heard as loud as thunder from the wage-earning class. Surely there was great reason in what he asked.

If it should be shown that he was wrong—and he did not think that likely—the inquiry might have the effect of satisfying the working classes that, at any rate, there was someone alive here and there to their wants and their desires, and who would see that those wants and desires would not be causelessly ignored. Whatever we did, there was one advantage left to England, of which some thought too little, and that was the bond that existed between our Colonies and ourselves. In them we had large areas of wheat-growing land, which could supply us, not only with corn, but also with the raw material for our manufactures, and, if need be, with manufactured goods. Let us cultivate our colonial relations. Let us unite with our Colonies on the general principles of a Zollverein; let us adapt those principles to the countries that would arrange their monetary, fiscal, and commercial affairs upon the same basis as ourselves. Then, within the British Zollverein, commercial relations would act harmoniously; we should derive from foreign countries exactly the benefit they derived from us; and then, if we could not have Free Trade wholly and entirely, we should not have that kind of business for which "Free Trade" was but a delusive misnomer; we could do away with the so-called favoured nation clauses; and we should put our commercial relations on a fair and just basis with reference to foreign countries; and should it be discovered—although he did not think that possible—that the new arrangement pressed with undue severity upon any particular class—say, for instance, that of agriculture—it would be a very easy matter to follow out a suggestion recently made, and devote some portion of the taxation thus extracted from the pocket of the foreigner to the removal of the burthen so pressing upon that class of the community. He trusted the Government would see the time had come when that which had been well described—though the epithet was not his—as the "bastard Free Trade" of this country should be replaced by fair and honourable duties on both sides, if it were impossible, as he believed it to be, to break down the Customs barriers of different countries. He would conclude by moving for the Select Committee of which he had given Notice.

Mr. EATON, in seconding the Motion, said, he entirely concurred with all that had fallen from the hon. and learned Member for Leeds (Mr. Wheelhouse) on the general question. He would, therefore, confine himself to making a few remarks on a special industry in which his constituents were interested, and with which he had been connected the greater part of his life. It had been exposed to such terrible disasters by the operation of the French Treaty of 1860, that the simple statement of the facts ought to justify inquiry before that Treaty was renewed. If there was to be another 20 years of such trade as they had just experienced the silk industry of this country would be entirely removed, and those who remained in it must inevitably be ruined. The best way to realize the disastrous effect the French Treaty had had on that industry was to compare the amount of raw silk consumed in this country before the operation of the French Treaty with that consumed since. In the 10 years before the Treaty the average annual consumption of silk was 6,000,000 lbs., and in the 10 years since the Treaty it had been reduced to 2,800,000 lbs. Before the Treaty the average annual value of the importation of silk manufactures was £6,000,000, and it was now increased to upwards of £13,000,000. In Coventry, in 1859, there were upwards of 80 silk manufactories doing a satisfactory trade; but in 1861 and the two following years there were not more than 12 whose owners had not been bankrupt or arranged with their creditors. The weekly wages in 1859 amounted to about £12,000, and now he was assured on the best authority they had so far fallen as scarcely to exceed £3,000. Manchester, Macclesfield, Nottingham, Leicester, Derby, and many other places had suffered in like manner. Such facts and figures ought to justify the demand for a Committee to inquire into the causes of the depression of trade, particularly in the textile manufactures. The effect of its continuance on the large mass of our working population must sooner or later demand the serious attention of the Government. Therefore, he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not refuse the inquiry.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "a Select Committee be appointed to consider the Commercial Relations at present existing between England and Foreign Nations, especially with regard to the import of Manufactured Goods from Abroad, as well as the effect caused by our system of one-sided so-called Free Trade, with a view (if possible) of permanently ameliorating the position of the wage classes of this Country,"—(*Mr. Wheelhouse*,)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. MACDONALD said, he had the interests of the working classes at heart as much as the hon. and learned Member for Leeds or the hon. Member for Coventry; but, in his opinion, their proposal was totally untenable, and some of the facts which had been stated were totally misleading without explanation. A little while ago it was said we had sent our last ton of iron to the United States. This was said to be owing to the prohibitory tariff of the States, and it was somewhat surprising that Parliamentary inquiry was not asked for. From 1873 to 1878 the United States suffered from commercial depression. All the money raised by the sale of their produce was required to maintain the people. There was a surplus in 1876, which was increased in 1877, 1878, and 1879; and at last, in spite of the tariff, 29*s.* 4*d.* per ton, and the heavy harbour and storage dues, they were taking our iron and steel by thousands of tons. They had been told that America was entering our market with their cotton goods. He would give an instance illustrating the manner in which the American cottons came to this country. Four years ago he met a gentleman, who was a manufacturer, at a public meeting, who confessed to him that for 14 months he had been imitating American cotton goods and selling them. That man was regarded as a shining light in a church; he was also a magistrate; yet he was practising fraud and deceit on his fellow-countrymen, making them believe that we were inundated by American cottons. He said it was impossible for America or any other country to compete with us—that could only be done when all the conditions were equal. There was no evidence to show that we need fear any country, whatever its tariff, if the people had only money to purchase with. They were told that Belgium was going to enter into the race against England. From the Trade Returns it would be found that we had sent more coal and iron to Belgium than we had ever done before, during the last year. They would do so this year. Two years ago he found the pits idle in Belgium, while the people there were burning English coal. What we wanted was a fair field and no favour. Our manufacturers and workmen could stand against the world. But we had been passing through a state of things for the last three years which was quite unparalleled. In India, where our cottons were consumed, famine had been stalking through the land, and where famine was manufacturers were not wanted. America had no surplus for three years, and could not buy our goods. The crops had fallen off in England, Scotland, and Ireland to the extent of £100,000,000. Had they had all this it would have been better for them though worse for America; the farmers, therefore, could not buy our manufactures. It was the elements we had had to contend against. Let there be two good years, as he hoped there would be, and with peace. If they wanted trade they must tie up the dogs of war. They must let Zulus rule themselves, and give up all theatrical gas about scientific boundaries. They had nothing to fear. A Select Committee was quite unnecessary.

MR. NEWDEGATE said, he could not possibly view with indifference the Motion which had been submitted to the House by the hon. and learned Member for Leeds (Mr. Wheelhouse), especially when he found that it was seconded by the hon. Member for Coventry (Mr. Eaton), a city which was situated within the county that he (Mr. Newdegate) had the honour to represent. He was sorry to say that he could testify to the depression of trade which the hon. Member for Coventry had described, and he thoroughly concurred with the hon. Member as to the cause to which that depression was to be attributed. The city of Coventry had lost, at least, one-half, he believed two-thirds, of its staple trade under the operation of the Treaty with France. The hon. and learned Member for Leeds had led the way among the Representatives of the commercial and manufacturing centres in calling the attention of the House to the state of our trade, and the fact that year by year the imports of foreign manufactured goods increased, owing to their being produced under such advantages of cheap labour abroad, and he believed there were Members of that House representing manufacturing constituencies, who were largely interested in, and applied a considerable amount of capital to, the encouragement of manufactures in foreign countries. That, to his knowledge, was a result of the present commercial system, dominated as that system was by the Treaties into which this country had entered. Under these circumstances, he could not be surprised at finding that out-of-doors the opinion was rapidly increasing that we were not trading under favourable conditions. It was only on the 19th of May last that he brought under the attention of the House the fact that the French Treaty, which was the foundation of all the other modern Commercial Treaties into which this country had entered, had been denounced—to use the French expression—by the French Government, who declared that France would no longer abide by that Treaty; and, if they might judge by the information which reached us from all quarters, France was about to bring that Treaty to a termination, with the view of obtaining conditions under a new Treaty or by the operations of her own commercial policy, still more to her own advantage. Last Session the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs replied to the Motion which he (Mr. Newdegate) had ventured to submit to the House, that negotiations were going on; and, had not the hon. and learned Member for Leeds anticipated him, he had fully intended to request that the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs would lay before this House some further information with regard to the progress of the negotiations to which he referred on that occasion. In the course of the last Session his hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth (Mr. Sampson Lloyd) induced the House to adopt a Resolution to the effect—

> "That it was desirable that a Minister to superintend our commercial relations should be appointed, and that that Minister should also have the superintendence of the condition of agriculture with a view to the information of this House."

The Session of 1880 had just opened, and yet they had no information of Her Majesty's Ministers having taken the slightest notice of that Resolution. He felt sure, then, that the House, as sometimes happened early in the Session, had not such information before it with regard to the condition of the negotiations for the renewal or abrogation of the French Treaty of Commerce, or such information before it with respect to the intentions of the Government in reference to the creation of a Ministry of Commerce and Agriculture, as would justify this House—and he spoke the sentiments of a great number of hon. Members—in taking another step in the direction which the hon. and learned Member for Leeds had, he thought, very wisely indicated. Feeling, then, that the House—and he knew this to be the opinion of other Members—lacked the requisite information on the subject, he begged to move the adjournment of the debate.

CAPTAIN PIM seconded the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Newdegate.*)

SIR HENRY JACKSON hoped that the Motion of the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) would not be acceded to. He (Sir Henry Jackson) did not think that any inquiry could alter the views of his hon. Friend or of other hon. Members on the subject raised by the hon. and learned Member for Leeds (Mr. Wheelhouse). Indeed, demands for inquiry had of late become suspected as being cloaks for demands for some particular results of such inquiry. For his own part, he could not but feel that the House and Her Majesty's Government were in as good a position now as they were ever likely to be for forming and expressing an opinion on this question. He had no intention of intruding upon the House on this subject, upon which so many hon. Members had better means for instructing the House than himself, were it not for the surprise with which he had heard some of the statements made by his hon. Friend and Colleague (Mr. Eaton), which certainly conveyed an impression of the condition of their constituency which was quite new to him. The House might not find it the most edifying spectacle to see the two Members representing the same constituency expressing different views as to its position; but he supposed the divergence was to be accounted for by the fact that, sitting on opposite sides of the House, each of them was in the habit of meeting among their constituents those who entertained similar opinions to his own. So far from thinking that Coventry was a fallen and ruined city, which seemed to be the impression of his hon. Colleague and of his hon. Friend the Member for North Warwickshire, he should describe it, from an acquaintance now of many years, as an industrious and frugal, and, until the last two or three years, on the whole, a thriving place. It had suffered, like every other place, from the recent depression; but it was a place which desired nothing but peace and quietness, and to be allowed the chance of paying its way. All knew that the French Treaty did produce great calamity in Coventry. That a protected industry, which up to 1860 had flourished like a hothouse plant, should fail, when suddenly, and without warning, left to itself, was, under the circumstances, not surprising. No one could be ignorant that great suffering and poverty were the immediate results of the legislation at that time. The whole country had felt and manifested the deepest sympathy with those who had suffered, and it never could be re-called to his own recollection without exciting a feeling of deep pity; but even in Coventry the memory of that sad time had nearly passed away, and he was happy to say that if the silk industry had fallen off other industries had taken its place; that neither the population of the town nor its rateable value had diminished; that if any hon. Members would pay the city a visit they would find that its houses had not fallen into decay; that new houses were taking the places of old ones, and that important public buildings were springing up and adding a charm to the streets of that ancient and venerable city. As to the general question, this was really the first occasion, as far as he remembered, on which Protection had avowedly raised its head and said its say in that House. Last year, they had a Motion on the subject of agricultural distress; and, no doubt, there was a certain tone and indication of *arrière pensée* about the debate which suggested that some day or another they might be regaled by another Protectionist banquet. But he did not know until today that anyone would rise in his place to say that in the re-introduction of protective duties was to be found the salvation of the country. His hon. Colleague had expressed his entire concurrence in every word that had fallen from the hon. Member for Leeds; both hon. Members, therefore, were perfectly honest in demanding Protection; but their theories seemed to be the theories of 35 years ago. Indeed, they came out so fresh and so little affected by what had happened in the meantime that one could not but imagine that they had been preserved and immured in one of those duty-free coffins which had excited the indignation of his hon. and learned Friend. What was really wanted was, not extra duties and enhanced costs, but that which, if and when we got it, would make us all contented—and, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer knew, good Freetraders too—a little increased buying power in the country. What would produce that? Good trade. And what would produce good trade? In the first place, good harvests abroad; and, in the next place, good harvests at home. For some years at least the earth had not given forth her increase; a good harvest in America had already told upon us, and should we have but one or two good years again, we should all have money to spend and be spending it, and nobody would have a word to say against Free Trade. His hon. Colleague had said that everyone engaged in the silk trade was on the high road to ruin, and would soon arrive at his destination. His hon. Friend knew the perfect respect he entertained for him; and he would, therefore, only say that he hoped his hon. Friend would not be among the number. His hon. Friend had referred to figures, and had stated that whereas we used to import only £6,000,000 of manufactured silk we now imported £13,000,000. What did that show? Nobody gave us the manufactured silk; we had to pay for it; and the money did not grow. How did we make it? By our own industries, by our coal, our iron, our cotton, by the profits we made upon every article we manufactured; by the course and volume of trade, which had fertilized the country and had found work for hundreds of thousands. What their fate would have been without Free Trade he did not care to think. He hoped the Government would speak out soon, and plainly, upon this question. It was one upon which, neither in that House nor at the hustings, should there be any weakness or misunderstanding.

Let it be known at once that both Parties were agreed to treat it as an economical, and not as a political, question; as a question affecting the well-being of millions of people whose destinies were committed to their charge. For his own part, he had no misgivings as to the Government action in this matter. They had often to blame the Government, but never for their treatment of this question. He had no doubt that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was as firm a Freetrader as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham himself. They knew the importance of the question, and they knew this—that whatever might have been said, if the thing were new, it was now too late to re-consider it. We had a population larger than our soil could support, and were therefore committed to a policy which could not be reversed, and upon which he hoped the Government would express their views in a manner which would finally put the question to rest.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, I will say but a very few words, because I wish to address myself to the question before the House—that of the adjournment of the debate. I wish distinctly to say, on the part of the Government, that they, of course, recognize the importance of this question; but, on the other hand, they think it would be wrong by any doubtful proceeding, countenanced especially by them, to raise a false idea or to produce a wrong impression as to their commercial policy. We are perfectly prepared, if the debate continues, to state reasons for not assenting to the Motion of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Leeds, and to examine that Motion thoroughly and respectfully. I fully recognize his right to bring the Motion forward; but I shall state reasons why we are not able to support him. One reason is that the appointment of such a Committee would seem to imply a change of opinion on the part of the Government, which, I think, would be injurious. Then comes the question of adjourning the debate. My hon. Friend the Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) says this Motion has been brought forward very early in the Session, and that it has not attracted the attention of many hon. Members; indeed, there are many Members who are not in possession of information which they would like to have; and my hon. Friend says that an adjournment of the debate would enable them to discuss the question more fully. The same difficulty which applies to the appointment of a Committee applies also to an adjournment of the debate. It seems to me that if at this hour of the evening we were to assent to the adjournment, when really we have plenty of time to go on with the discussion, it would, to some extent, be delusive, and might produce an incorrect impression. But, besides that, I have an objection to an adjournment of a debate upon the Motion for going into Committee of Supply, because such a proceeding affects the granting of Supply, and leads to considerable confusion in the conduct of the Business of the House; and, therefore, I cannot consent to the Motion of the hon. Member for North Warwickshire. But, on the other ground, I could not agree to the Motion of the hon. and learned Member for Leeds. As to the time of bringing it forward, that is a matter for which Government, of course, are not responsible.

Question put, and *negatived.*

MR. BOURKE said, that, though the hon. and learned Member who had moved for a Select Committee represented a great commercial community, he had made many observations which had surprised him, and with hardly any of which he was able to agree. His hon. and learned Friend had begun by deploring the fact that Free Trade had altogether proved a failure, and that its principles were founded on fallacious grounds. He had not expected to be called upon to prove to the House the error into which his hon. and learned Friend had fallen; but, perhaps, the best way of disposing of the statement that Free Trade had been a failure was to give a few figures showing the results of the adoption of that policy. He would take the same test applied by his hon. and learned Friend—namely, the exports of the United Kingdom. He found that in the year 1839 the value of the exports was £53,000,000, in round numbers, and that a few years after the repeal of the Corn Laws it amounted to £63,000,000. There was a very marked increase in their value during the 10 years 1849 to 1859, at which latter time it had more than doubled itself, and had risen to £130,000,000. In 1869 it was £189,000,000, and in 1877 it had further increased to £199,000,000. In 1872 the exports were £256,000,000 in value, and although since that time they had decreased in value they had not decreased in quantity. Again, taking the value of the exports per head of the population, he found that that value was in 1829 £1 10*s*. 6*d*., in 1859 £4 11*s*. 2*d*., and in 1877 £5 18*s*. 11*d*. There was, moreover, an increase, in much the same proportion, in the tonnage of our merchant shipping, the total of which in 1840 was 2,000,000 tons, and in 1878 16,000,000 in round numbers. Another good test of the prosperity of the country was the Income Tax, the assessment of which amounted to £251,000,000 in 1843, and to £535,000,000 in 1875. In the same way, the deposits in Savings Banks had increased from £53,000,000 in 1840 to £70,000,000 in 1876. Lastly, he might mention that in 1841 the percentage of paupers was 8·2 of the population, and that in 1876 the ratio had fallen to 3·1. Now, there could be no doubt that those figures alone would be sufficient to show that his hon. and learned Friend was in error in asserting that the Free Trade policy had been a failure in this country.

MR. WHEELHOUSE: Will the hon. Gentleman give the House the imports?

MR. BOURKE said, he would come to that presently; but it was quite another question. His hon. and learned Friend, however, had not given the imports, but had based his case on the exports, and he had taken them as the comparison instituted by his hon. and learned Friend. His hon. and learned Friend had told the House of the gloomy impression made on his mind when he walked in the City and saw the vast number of articles that had been brought from Germany, France, Switzerland, and other countries; but if he had pursued his examination of that circumstance, and had asked himself the simple question why these goods had been imported, he would have arrived at a fact which, he thought, comprised pretty nearly the whole of the Free Trade doctrine. Those goods were there because the people wished to buy them, and if the people could not afford to buy them they would not be there. The reason they could afford to buy them was that they had been making profits in their respective trades, and were able to become customers of the whole world, very much to their own advantage. It was rather difficult to review all the arguments of his hon. and learned Friend, because the case admitted of no compromise whatever. It was impossible for him to go one inch with his hon. and learned Friend in his sympathy for what he had called the distressed industry of this country, arising out of Free Trade principles. For his own part, he could not trace that distress, in the least degree, to the action of Free Trade. His hon. and learned Friend had spoken of the excess of imports over exports, and here he gave expression to one of the primary fallacies in this case. There could be no doubt that an excess of imports over exports had occurred in this country; and the theory was that we had, therefore, paid the difference in specie. That, however, was a fallacy, and it was not only a fallacy in theory, but it was capable of disproof, because it could be clearly shown that in the very years when we were exporting the most goods we were also importing most specie, and during the four years 1870-73 we received from abroad in gold and silver bullion or specie £19,000,000 more than we exported. They were told that this was one-sided Free Trade. They all admitted that it was, and they all wished that foreign countries would open their markets to us; but his contention was that one-sided Free Trade was better than no Free Trade at all. It was true, no doubt, that many markets might be opened to English goods if the tariffs were altered; and it would be the constant endeavour of the Government to use every effort they could in order to make foreigners see it would be to their advantage, as it had been to our own, to lower their tariffs. He trusted the House would not adopt any Resolution showing that we had lost faith in the least degree in the principles of Free Trade. It was by persuading foreign nations that it had produced enormous results for us that we must endeavour to induce them to follow our example. He was happy to say that we had a good deal of encouragement; for although the Governments of Europe did not evince any hope at the present moment of being able to reduce their tariffs, yet among the commercial bodies of Europe there was evidently a misgiving in the soundness of the course they were pressing on their respective Governments; for, although they were stout Protectionists, they never approached their own Governments without admitting in principle that they were staunch Freetraders. Accounts from Germany and France showed that each commercial body pressed on the Ministers of State the expediency of protecting its own interests and of giving Free Trade to all the rest of the world. It was just the same in the Colonies, as appeared from a most amusing account given in *The Times* the other day. In one instance an umbrella-maker, the only one in the Colony, maintained that he ought to be protected; but, at the same time, he was a staunch Freetrader with regard to cotton, silk, iron, sticks, and the other materials of which umbrellas were made. His hon. and learned Friend had mentioned the French Treaty. The negotiations respecting the Treaty of Commerce with France were suspended in consequence of the French Government declining to proceed with them until the general tariff was decided upon. Consequently, we came to an arrangement with France that things should remain as they were for six months after the tariff was agreed upon. It was very easy to show what great advantages had arisen from the Treaty made in 1860 with France, although he at once admitted that Coventry had been a very great sufferer from that Treaty. When Free Trade was introduced, Sir Robert Peel, no doubt, hoped that it would be unnecessary to resort to Commercial Treaties, and that foreigners would see it was to their advantage to adopt Free Trade. But although this was his opinion, Sir Robert Peel was not in theory opposed to Commercial Treaties, for both he and Lord Melbourne, between 1838 and 1843, attempted to make a Commercial Treaty with France, and they only failed in doing so in consequence of M. Guizot saying it would be impossible to carry such a Treaty through the French Chambers. In 1860, after 15 years of experience, Mr. Cobden thought it was no use waiting any longer for foreign nations to follow our example; and he succeeded in negotiating a Treaty which vastly increased the trade, not only of this country, but of Europe. Subsequently a great many other Treaties were made, which affected the trade of the whole world. That was one of the objects Mr. Cobden and the late Emperor Napoleon had in view, for they perceived that, if they once made a Treaty between this country and France, other countries would make Treaties among themselves; that in this way a network of Treaties would grow up; and that we, by the "most favoured nation" clauses, should be able to take advantage of all the Treaties which were negotiated. The result of the French Treaty had brought about a vast increase in the trade of France; and he believed that one of the great causes which had enabled France to pay her great Debt in the way she had paid it, and to bear the enormous burden thrown upon her by the late war, was the fact that, apart from her good harvests since 1870-71, and apart from her enormous productive power, she had between 1860 and 1870, by reason of the Commercial Treaty with this country, attained to a pitch of commercial prosperity which she did not enjoy before. Thus she was enabled to bear the tremendous trials which came upon her. Of course, his hon. and learned Friend had based his case in a great measure on the depression of trade in this country during the last two or three years. But other countries had suffered a great deal more. Austria and Germany, for instance, had suffered a great deal more, and these were highly protective countries. Again, the United States had, up to last year, suffered quite as much as we did, and perhaps more. Looking at the result in a general way, the protective system had greatly injured the United States, whereas the reverse system had enabled us to do a great deal more of the Ocean traffic than America did. Some people said that this country took more from other countries than they took from us; but this country took what it wanted, and it was only common sense to buy in the cheapest markets. He would not weary the House by saying more upon the subject. His hon. and learned Friend represented a very important constituency, composed in a great measure of working men engaged in various industries, and it was desirable that such a class of constituents should know beyond all question that Her Majesty's present Government, at any rate, had no doubt whatever about the commercial soundness of our policy of Free Trade. His own relations with foreign Powers and foreign statesmen made him see the thorough hollowness of their protective system. He had also come to the conclusion that they saw it themselves, and if it were not for the very great interests which were represented in the foreign Legislatures and Governments, he believed the whole system of Protection would fall about their heads like a house of cards. It was, as his right hon. Friend had already said, quite out of the power of the Government to grant this Committee. He therefore hoped his hon. and learned Friend would try and convince his constituents that, after all, the best thing for the working man was to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest.

MR. CHILDERS said, after the admirable speech of the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, he felt it was unnecessary to say more than a very few words. Every word of that speech he was prepared to endorse, and still more strongly could he endorse from personal experience what the hon. Gentleman had said in regard to the United States. He had seen a good deal of that country during the five years of its deepest commercial depression, and he could say without hesitation that, to a large extent, the commercial trials of the period from 1873 to 1878 were due to the adoption of the rotten system of Protection. But, after all, was it really worth while to refer such a question as this to the consideration of a Committee? Why, the House might just as well set a Committee to examine the Multiplication Table. If there was one thing on which nineteen-twentieths of the country, speaking of those who had read something of political economy, and knew the rules that should guide man and man in their commercial relations—if there was anything on which the country was thoroughly agreed, it was this very Free Trade principle which had been now adopted so long, and with such highly beneficial results. Of course, there were some few persons who held a contrary opinion, just as there were some persons who denied the rotundity of the earth—no arguments persuading them it was not flat; but to ask for a Committee to convince these few would be as ridiculous as to ask for one to consider whether the earth was not flat, or whether twice two really made four. One suggestion he hoped the hon. and learned Member for Leeds (Mr. Wheelhouse) would act upon. He hoped he would not be persuaded to withdraw his Motion or not to take a division upon it, for it was important that the country should know, after all that had been said about Protection and Reciprocity—which was Protection in disguise—it was right the country should know how many Members there were in the House who were prepared to go back to Protection. If the hon. and learned Member for Leeds had the courage of his opinions—and, without affectation, he might say he knew no man more willing to defend the opinions he held than he—he asked him to allow the question to go to a distinct division, that the country might know how many Protectionists or advocates of Reciprocity the House contained. He thought that would put an end to the agitation for Protection.

SIR GEORGE BOWYER, referring to the assertion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Pontefract (Mr. Childers), that a man who denied the doctrine of Free Trade and Reciprocal Free Trade was like a man who denied the rotundity of the earth, said, he must remind the right hon. Gentleman that the whole civilized world was against Free Trade. Europe and America, to whose opinions we were taught to bow down and worship, were against Free Trade. Although he (Sir George Bowyer) had been brought up in the doctrines of Free Trade, that fact so far shook his belief in it as to make him think that inquiry was desirable. There were no people so dogmatical as political economists. Questions of political economy were subject to great modification from collateral subjects. A political economist told you that wherever there was a demand for labour there was a supply, and that the labourer would always carry his labour to the best market. He would do so if he could. We were all taught in the school of Mr. Cobden that Free Trade was the great panacea and the great secret for the prosperity of mankind, and since that time any man who denied that doctrine was looked upon as a man who deserved to be burnt, as out of the faith. But the country was finding that there were many things that tended to throw a doubt on the doctrine of Free Trade.

If all countries would give up their protective duties, he thought Free Trade would work very well. But, when he regarded all the circumstances which had interfered with the working out of the Free Trade principles, he thought it was a subject for inquiry and consideration. Even our own Colonies were turning against the doctrine of Free Trade. Canada had adopted protective duties against England. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright) was excessively indignant at her doing so, and would almost wish us to declare war against Canada to compel her to alter her commercial policy. But the Canadians knew their own business. They had acted with a view to their own interest, and they had so far declared against the doctrine of Free Trade. There was, he believed, a strong feeling in this country that the question of Free Trade required re-consideration, at least in cases where there was no Reciprocity. Whether right or wrong, that feeling was gaining such strength that by-and-bye it would become a serious matter, because many of the working men, the manufacturers, and others concerned in the industry of this country believed that we ought not to allow Free Trade except with those countries which acted on that principle themselves. As to the assertion that Reciprocity was Protection in disguise, that was only one of those phrases which were intended to gull people. Reciprocity was a principle apart from Free Trade. Mr. Cobden always argued his theories on the assumption that other nations would be so convinced of the truth of Free Trade that the whole civilized world would be governed by his doctrines. But Mr. Cobden had been proved to be wrong in that assumption, and a state of things now existed which he had not contemplated. Therefore, that question might properly be examined by a Select Committee, which could take the opinions of various classes in this and also in foreign countries, thus obtaining a body of evidence which would much assist the deliberations of the next Parliament. He was himself still a Freetrader, provided Free Trade was carried out fairly; but he could not be insensible to the fact that no other country followed the commercial policy we had adopted; and, therefore, the time had come when the examination of the question was extremely desirable. If the hon. and learned Member for Leeds pressed his Motion to a division he would vote for a Committee. At the same time, he thought that the hon. and learned Gentleman would act more wisely by not dividing, and should be content to rely on his own able speech, and also on the debate he had originated, which would, no doubt, be considered by the country.

Mr. BARRAN said, that his hon. and learned Friend and Colleague (Mr. Wheelhouse) had been spoken of as a very popular man, particularly so in his own constituency. He was deservedly popular; but his popularity was not owing to the views he entertained upon this question. He (Mr. Barran) desired to speak upon this Motion, in order that his hon. and learned Friend might not be considered the exponent of principles which were held by the large body of the electors of Leeds. He was confident that if Leeds were polled upon the question of Free Trade the majority would very largely preponderate against his hon. and learned Colleague, who claimed that he did not advocate Reciprocity in the interests of the rich. Now, the very class whom that hon. and learned Member professed to represent to-night were the very class who had profited most by the introduction of Free Trade. In 1842, before Free Trade was established, there was great depression of trade, and one out of every eight of the adult male population of Leeds was a pauper; the working men were not earning more than two-thirds of the average wages now paid to them; and although wages and profits were then low, and work very scarce, bread and other articles of food were dear, starvation being much more common than it had been ever since Free Trade was adopted. The recollection of these circumstances was very vivid in the minds of many thousands of the people of Leeds, and this would lead them to think very seriously before they ventured to support the views of his hon. and learned Friend. By Free Trade they not only had food cheaper and labour more abundant, but luxuries were enjoyed by the people to an extent that was unknown before that system came into operation. It was said that trade was now in a deplorable state; but it must be remembered that they had had three successive bad harvests, and that on a fair computation the loss to the nation through the bad harvest of last year was between £25,000,000 and £30,000,000, the effect of which could not but be injurious to various branches of industry. If, under those circumstances, flour, instead of being 2*s.* 4*d.* per stone, had been 4*s.* 4*d.*, as in former days, and the people had little employment, the distress must have been severe. It was said that other countries adhered to Protection; but if they went to Austria, Germany, Italy, or even to France, they would find that in proportion as their restrictive tariffs were developed the earnings of the people diminished. There was no other country, save America, where the people earned such large wages, and enjoyed so many luxuries, as they did here. Such being the case, the House would carefully consider before they reverted to a system which had proved in the past to be prejudicial to the best interests of the nation. An improvement in trade was visible; and although, at present, the circumstances of the country were not as satisfactory as we could wish, he did not think the position in which we found ourselves was one which ought to strike us with terror and dismay. He hoped his hon. and learned Friend would divide the House, for he was satisfied that the division would be such as would so far satisfy his hon. and learned Colleague and his constituents that the principles which he held were not principles which were acceptable to the House or likely to be endorsed by the nation.

MR. ALDERMAN COTTON said, it was with great satisfaction that he had heard the Chancellor of the Exchequer state that he was not in favour of the Motion, inasmuch as a return to Protection would, in his opinion, be one of the greatest calamities which could befall the country. Forty years ago every article which we imported was subject to taxation of some kind or other, and trade was really reduced to a minimum; but during the 34 years which followed, the prosperity of the country, the accumulation of large fortunes, and the comforts of the working classes had increased in an unparalleled degree. And, although the last two or three years had been a period of depression, trade had begun to show such evidences of revival that we might hope for a return of that prosperity which the country had so long enjoyed. The iron and cotton trades had greatly revived. With respect to the decay of the Coventry and Macclesfield trades, it was altogether a thing apart from Free Trade, being the result of fashion. If to-morrow the ladies of England took into their favour silks and ribbons, as formerly, that trade would revive. When the hon. and learned Gentleman complained that our import trade was three times as large as our export trade, he forgot that the people of this country derived as much profit from the former as from the latter. A large portion of it originated with our countrymen in India and the Colonies; it came to this country in English bottoms, paying freight to English shipowners, and harbour and dock dues to English proprietors; and if it were not for that trade we should cease to be what we were—a great producing people. As to the recent depression in trade, it was to a considerable extent attributable to the repudiation of foreign loans, to reckless speculation, and not a little to the prevalence of strikes. The great rule to adopt was to buy in the cheapest market, and that could only be done if we had Free Trade. The artizans and labouring classes of this country were never so well clothed, housed, and fed as they now were. If we could not produce an article of the same quality and at the same price, we ought by all means to buy it from abroad. He considered that the time spent by the Committee of last Session on the question of the sugar bounties was time wasted, and since then the rise in the price of sugar had been enormous—as much as £5 per ton; and, although it had since fallen about 50*s.*, the sugar refiners of this country had reaped an immense advantage. He was quite sure the House would not let Protection, under any shape, interfere with the well-established principles of Free Trade.

MR. BENTINCK said, that after a long experience of Free Trade, not only the working classes, but all classes of society, had suffered from the mistaken financial policy which had been adopted by this country; and the working classes had suffered most. Adverting to what fell from the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Barran), he denied that the number of paupers in this country had been diminished by the action of Free Trade. The fact was the very reverse; the number of paupers was larger now under Free Trade. He entirely disputed what was so constantly said on the question of dear bread. We had had an experience of 60 years—30 years before the repeal of the Corn Laws and 30 years since. Now, 30 years was ample time to judge of the effects of a policy, and he had no hesitation in saying that the price of bread had been higher under the system of Free Trade than it had been under that of Protection. He was an old Protectionist; but they were not discussing the question of Free Trade and Protection—he meant the question so far as it related to countries in a high state of cultivation; but they were discussing the question whether the position of Free Trade without Reciprocity was a tenable position. He was sorry to say that he was old enough to recollect that the early advocates of Free Trade used to put it forward that their policy would be so beneficial to the human race that when once England set the example that policy would be adopted by all foreign nations; Free Trade would become the practice of the whole world. Had that been the case? Thirty years was long enough to judge of the effects of a financial policy. So far from that having been the case, the whole tendency of the financial policy of all the chief European Powers, of the United States and of our own Colonies was to the imposition of protective duties. There was no inclination to try Free Trade. It was a policy which must be ruinous to every class in society with the exception of one class, which formed but a small proportion of the whole; he meant the class of annuitants who were dependent on fixed incomes—the non-producing class. Thus the result of Free Trade was that it fed the drones and starved the working bees. The policy of Free Trade was based on the argument that it would cheapen the food of the people; but he held that this argument was a delusive one, and further, that the principle of Free Trade was brought forward under false pretences. He remembered the day when members of the Anti-Corn Law League were looked upon as patriots, and when they were able to produce what was tantamount to a political revolution. He ventured, however, to repeat, being careful to avoid the strong language not seldom resorted to by a right hon. Gentleman opposite, that the whole movement was brought forward under false pretences. He might mention one fact in support of this opinion. One of the most distinguished members of the Anti-Corn Law League, when asked—"Why are you so adverse to the land interest, so indignant against the owners who produce the food of the people; why do you vituperate them and parade them before the country as men who are responsible for the sufferings of their fellow-countrymen?" replied, "You quite mistake us; we have no antipathy to the land, or to those connected with it; we only want one thing—namely, food at the price of the world, that we may get labour at the price of the world." This was a very natural view for men who had much capital embarked in commercial pursuits to hold; but it was not the professed object of the League. The members of the League endeavoured to persuade the people that they were trying to reduce the taxes on food, when they were, in reality, trying to obtain cheap labour for themselves. He could say without fear that there were two great glaring fallacies in the doctrines of Free Traders. The first was comprised in the words "cheap food." If he could believe that the doctrine of Free Trade tended to cheapen the food and increase the comfort of the people, he should be a Free Trader; but it was his strong conviction that the real effect of the doctrines of Free Trade was to decrease the wages of the working classes and increase their miseries. The words "cheap food" contained a fallacy, for this reason—food should not be considered dear or cheap according to the price of the quartern loaf, but according to the ability of the working man to earn sufficient wages to purchase what food he required. If then, as he asserted, the doctrines of Free Trade led to a decrease in the wages of the labouring man, its supporters were, in reality, making his position worse than it was before. The other point to which he wished to draw attention was the confusion which existed in the minds of a great number of very distinguished persons as to the difference between consumers and producers. The advocates of Free Trade always contended that the object of their policy was to benefit the condition of the consumers on the assumption that the consumers included the great mass of the community, and that, therefore, while improving the position of the consumers, they would be improving the position of the majority of the human race. He denied the truth of this assumption altogether, for the great mass of the community was formed by the producing class, consisting chiefly of the labourer and artizan, who, as he had shown, derived no benefit from Free Trade. There was another fact which had probably never occurred to many of those whom he was then addressing. They had heard a great deal about the Corn Laws being a tax upon the food of the people. Even if they assumed the truth of this, was the House aware that the Corn Laws as they existed in 1846 increased the price of a 4lb. loaf by only one-fifth of a penny? But he went further, and maintained, from a comparison of the price of bread in the 30 years preceding and the 30 years succeeding the repeal of the Corn Laws, that the average price of corn in this country was lower during the former period. The effect of the duty on corn, therefore, was not to raise the price; but, in any case, the amount of the increase was not more than one-fifth of a penny upon the 4lb. loaf. How was that argument to be answered? The real effect of the sliding scale duty was to regulate the price of corn by inducing speculators to hold a large amount in bond ready to meet the requirements of the market. One result was that the price of corn was kept at a much more steady level. Another result was that during the operation of the duties there were always two years' consumption of corn stored up in the country, whereas, now, we were living from hand to mouth, with only two or three months' consumption in reserve; and, therefore, any sudden emergency might reduce us to starvation. We heard a great deal about the taxpayer, who was always crying out and giving annoyance to everybody. By a stroke of the pen they might derive a large income of many millions a-year from the pockets of the foreigner, and enormously relieve the taxpayer of this country. But there was one great obstacle to such a course. There were a great many very distinguished, very able, and very eloquent men on the Treasury and front Opposition Benches, who, while on other matters they maintained an attitude of the most hostile antagonism towards one another, were, unfortunately, agreed upon the subject of Protection and Free Trade. Many of them had been in former times strong advocates of Protection, and had suddenly been converted to the doctrines of Free Trade. This change had been brought about by political considerations, and not from conviction. These Gentlemen, naturally, were not inclined to recant all they had said, and admit that they had yielded to political necessity. This was the real difficulty of the case, and how it was to be got over he was not prepared to say. But it would have to be got over somehow, for he believed it was the feeling of the country that Free Trade without Reciprocity was national ruin, and must lead to the most disastrous results. The pressure would become so strong throughout the length and breadth of the land that resistance would be impossible. He wished to add one word with reference to a remark that had fallen from the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He had understood the hon. Gentleman to say that the excess of imports over exports was no proof of the failure of the national policy in this matter. He had heard that statement with the most profound astonishment. He wished to make every concession to the high character and great ability of his hon. Friend; but he was utterly at a loss to understand how any man occupying the distinguished position of his hon. Friend, and filling it with so much success, could put forward a doctrine which appeared to him, not only untenable, but monstrous. It was a simple question of arithmetic. If you were always giving half-a-crown and taking a shilling, however long your purse might be, where would your position be at the end of a certain number of years? As far as he had been able to collect the facts, the balance of trade against the country during the last five or six years had been somewhere about £150,000,000 a-year. The question was one of fact as well as one of policy. They were paying so much and receiving so much. They were paying a great deal and receiving very little—a financial policy which must lead to irretrievable national ruin. He warned the House that they could not persevere in a policy which was draining the resources of the country, and the effect of which would be to deprive the masses of the people of the means of earning their livelihood.

Mr. BRIGGS said, he would not occupy the attention of the House for more than a few minutes, as he had not come down prepared with a speech. At the same time, he was pleased to hear the declaration of Her Majesty's Government that they were undoubtedly in favour of Free Trade. At present there was no question of Reciprocity. That word might be whispered when a Cabinet Minister visited his constituents, or be heard occasionally in the agricultural districts; but it could not in the House of Commons. He should have imagined that a very short discussion would have disposed of this question, and when he heard the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) move the adjournment of the debate he was surprised that the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not inform him that he was guilty of obstruction to the Business of the House. Nothing could have been dearer to the heart of a Freetrader than to hear the way in which Protection, sitting behind the Treasury Bench, had been thoroughly castigated by a Conservative Minister, and he did not think that for some time it would dare to raise its head. The hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had declared that, in his opinion, those who advocated the repeal of the Corn Laws were not so much desirous of cheapening the food of the people as of getting cheap labour for themselves. He could not but consider that to be a monstrous accusation. As a matter of fact, labour had been cheaper before the repeal of the Corn Laws than it had been since. The hon. Gentleman would not say that corn was cheaper before the duties were abolished than it was now. Would the hon. Gentleman assert that it would be for the advantage of the working classes that we should go back to the state of things which existed before the Corn Laws were repealed? For his part, he believed that it was not in the interest of working people that Reciprocity was demanded; it was in the interest of land. Those who were in favour of Protection did not want to impose a duty upon manufactured articles, but upon raw materials, and, of all raw materials, they wanted to tax corn. ["No!"] What was it then? What did hon. Gentlemen want to tax? What else could they tax? They talked about silk and watches, and such luxuries of life; but these formed but a small portion of the great total of our imports. The great total of our imports consisted of hides, tallow, cotton, and corn. How would they tax America? Would they tax its cotton or its corn? What else had America to tax? [Mr. Macdonald: Mops and pails.] Mops and pails; well, they might as well try to mop out and pail out the ocean of public opinion as expect to carry the object they had in view. The proposal was really so absurd that hon. Gentlemen who made it did not know what to say for themselves. Her Majesty's Government were once told by the hon. Member for Finsbury (Mr. M'Cullagh Torrens) that there was one place they must not go to, and that was between the food and the mouths of the people, and he was glad the Government had recognized that fact. He believed that the employers of labour and the working classes were as true to Free Trade at that moment as they were five years ago—he might say 30 years—notwithstanding what the hon. and learned Member for Leeds had stated that evening. Let the hon. and learned Member go to Blackburn and call a meeting of the working classes, and discuss the question before them, and if he got a verdict in favour of his Motion he (Mr. Briggs) would never in that House speak against it again. They had heard a great deal about Coventry to-night. Nothing could be more curious than the different lights in which the two hon. Members had portrayed that city. He was rather inclined to agree with the hon. and learned Baronet (Sir Henry Jackson) that the position of that city was not so black as it was painted by the hon. Member (Mr. Eaton) on the other side. In all great transitions some people must suffer. It was the case in Lancashire. When they changed from the use of the handloom to the powerloom the small weavers suffered severely, as the silk weavers in Coventry had done. But there was this which was worse in the case of the Lancashire weaver—he had carried on his trade under legitimate conditions; the silk weaver had carried on his trade under illegitimate conditions. The one had suffered under the natural development of a trade, the other because he had been nourished like a hot-house plant, and when the cold blast of Free

Trade came upon him he could not stand the robust atmosphere of open-air competition. They could not help being sorry for both of these classes; but if they were to move on in this world they must do so though some people were left behind in the race. It was idle to endeavour to retain an unhappy and illegitimate state of things, because some people might suffer by the introduction of a better. He was glad the Government had spoken out so clearly and definitely on the subject of Free Trade, and he hoped it would set at rest the question. As they had been taken to Coventry so much in the course of this discussion, he might quote some lines which the hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who occupied the front Ministerial Bench, remembering the old Free Trade struggles, might use towards Members opposite—

> "Not only we . . . .
> New men, that in the flying of a wheel
> Cry down the past . . . .
> Have loved the people well,
> And loathed to see them overtaxed, but they
> Did more, and underwent and overcame."

MR. HERMON said, this question had been a good deal discussed by the working people of Lancashire; so much so, that, in addressing his constituents, he had sometimes to tell them unpleasant truths, such as if they were prepared to adopt a system of taxing their food he should be prepared to advocate Reciprocity, which would enable them to place a tax on foreign manufactures. But he must say he got no decided answer from them. He told them that before discussing the question whether they should place a tax on the import of foreign manufactures they must be prepared for a corresponding tax on food. While there was no tax on corn, the farmer had a right to buy his farming implements and everything connected with the culture of his land as cheaply as he possibly could. The two questions must go together. There were two sides to the question of Free Trade; and if the hon. and learned Member for Leeds went to a division he should go with him, for the very purpose of having it understood in the country that they could not have Reciprocity without abandoning the benefit they received from the free import of food. If they took with one hand, they must give with the other. It was for this reason only he would vote for the Resolution, although he could wish it had been differently worded. If there was an inquiry, the working population of the country would have it in their power to state what they meant, and whether they wished to return to the old system and to tax imported food as well as imported manufactures—for the taxation of the two must go together. They must not expect that the farmer would be willing to compete with all the world, unless he could buy all he required in the cheapest market. It might have been beneficial if we had pursued a different course when we adopted Free Trade; but it was a different question whether we should now retrace our steps. There might have been times before Free Trade when corn was cheap; but it was still true that we had passed through crises in which we should have suffered still more acutely if it had not been for Free Trade. His chief motive in voting for the Resolution was that the public outside should become acquainted with the real state of the case, and should realize the fact that they must consider the much more serious question of what should be done with imported articles of food.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The House *divided:*—Ayes 75; Noes 6: Majority 69.—(Div. List, No. 5.)

Main Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

TREATY GUARANTEES.

OBSERVATIONS. QUESTION.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT, in rising to call attention to the present state of the European Guarantees under the Treaties of 1856 and 1871, said, that he was sorry the pressure of the division which had just taken place should have deprived them of the assistance of his hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General. As, however, the question which he had to ask the Government was not a legal one, they might console themselves for the loss. He wished to ask the Government for some explanation on a matter which he regarded as of the greatest importance. He was sure everyone would feel that it was a matter of great consequence to this country, and to Europe, to know exactly how we stood with reference to our guarantees to foreign States? He himself had always had considerable doubt as to what was our present exact situation in regard to the guarantees to Turkey under the Treaties of 1856 and 1871. He had made more than one attempt to obtain the views of Her Majesty's Government on the subject, but not with any very great success or any definite advantage. But he observed that a few weeks ago a noble Lord, a Member of the Government, though not a Member of the Cabinet, whose ability they all recognized (Lord George Hamilton), came forward with a very definite statement upon the subject. The statement was made evidently after careful consideration, and in carefully selected language, and he would ask leave to read it to the House.

> "That we have increased our liabilities by the Anglo-Turkish Convention is equally absurd. When we came into office the Treaty of Paris had been renewed by Mr. Gladstone three years before, and by that Treaty and its sequel—the Tripartite Treaty—we gave an unconditional and unlimited guarantee to maintain the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire. At any moment France or Austria might have called upon us to maintain by force of arms that pledge. By the Treaty of Berlin a different arrangement was devised for European Turkey. As regards the remainder of Turkey, we substituted a limited and conditional Treaty—limited to Asiatic Turkey, and conditional upon reforms being carried out. So long, therefore, as the whole is greater than the part, so long will a conditional and limited Treaty, such as the Anglo-Turkish Convention, be a contraction and not an expansion of an unconditional and unlimited liability, such as was contained in the Treaty of 1856."

It was perfectly plain what the noble Lord meant by that statement. It either distinctly asserted or implied three propositions. It asserted, first, what was perfectly true, that before the Treaty of Berlin there was an unlimited and unconditional guarantee under the Tripartite Treaty; second, it asserted that the unlimited and unconditional guarantee no longer existed, and that in place of it had been substituted the Anglo-Turkish Convention; and, third, as that was not unlimited and not unconditional, and as a part was necessarily less than the whole, therefore our liabilities were less than they were before. He (Sir William Harcourt) wished to know from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether this opinion, expressed by a Minister not in the Cabinet, was the view of that Cabinet? He wished the right hon. Gentleman clearly to understand that his object was not to invite him to contradict that statement; on the contrary, he hoped he would confirm it. He did not desire that the Tripartite Treaty should exist. He desired to see every guarantee of the Turkish Empire disappear, and the more they disappeared the better he would be pleased. He wanted, however, to know, on a little higher authority than that of the noble Lord the Vice President of the Council, whether that was the true view of the situation? If the noble Lord's view of the situation was correct, then at Berlin was achieved a destruction of the Turkish Empire far more complete than anyone believed, because, according to the noble Lord, at Berlin was swept away at once and for ever the whole of the guarantees which had been created in 1856. If that were the true view of the case, then the Treaty of Berlin struck a fatal blow at the maintenance and integrity of the Turkish Empire, because it swept away the whole of the fabric which was created in 1856. He hoped the noble Lord was right, for it would relieve England and Europe of a great embarrassment, and from what, if acted upon, would prove a great disgrace. The Treaties of 1856 had never been operative. Whenever a *casus fœderis* arose these Treaties had broken down. In the years 1870-71, when the question of the Black Sea Clauses arose, the Treaty did not work. England, in common with France and Austria, had engaged to resist by force of arms any attempt to alter the terms of that Treaty; but neither she nor any of the other Powers did resist such an attempt. France could not resist; Austria did not; Germany was a party to the demand to alter it; and England declined to resist alone. England might, no doubt, have acted alone and interfered; he had heard hon. Gentlemen opposite reproach the Government of that day for not doing so; but if England had acted alone she would not have acted with the force of the Treaty of 1856. The Government of 1871 did not act alone, for exactly the same reasons as the Government which succeeded them declined to act alone in 1878-9. In a well-known despatch accompanying the Treaty of Berlin Lord Salisbury stated that, having denounced the retrocession of Bessarabia and the cession of Batoum, which were, of course, a violation of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, they yielded these points because they found that the Powers of Europe would not support them in resisting them. That was exactly the ground upon which Lord Granville acted in 1870 in the case of the Black Sea Clauses of the Treaty of 1856. Hon. Gentlemen opposite blamed him for not acting alone then; why did they not themselves act alone in the case of Bessarabia and Batoum? Why, because all England would have condemned them, just as all England would have condemned the late Government in the case of the Black Sea Clauses. He referred to these matters incidentally, only to support the proposition that whenever a *casus fœderis* had arisen the shield of the Treaty of 1856 had utterly broken down. Not one of the Powers to those Treaties had ever called upon the other parties to carry them out; and for a good reason, probably because they knew they would call in vain. When, in 1877, the Government received notice that Russia was going to war—that she was going to attack the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire—they did not call upon any one of the parties to the Treaty of 1856 to act upon it. It seemed idle, therefore, to attempt to revive the operation of the Treaty of 1856 when two successive Governments had not, when the occasion arose, called upon any of the parties to this Treaty to act upon it; and when none of the other Powers called upon England, they might look upon it as a dead letter. He wanted to know whether we could regard them as documents which had no force in Europe? If, however, the Tripartite Treaty still existed, then everything the noble Lord the Vice President of the Council had said was wrong, because, in that case, their liabilities were not diminished; on the contrary, they remained, and the Anglo-Turkish Convention was superadded. He wanted, therefore, to know if the noble Lord was right in saying that all these guarantees had been replaced by the Anglo-Turkish Convention? If all the guarantees given by the other Powers were gone, there was no guarantee by any Power in Europe of Turkey in Europe, and there was no guarantee by any Power in Europe of Turkey in Asia, except England under the Anglo-Turkish Convention, which, Her Majesty's Government would admit, had not yet been fulfilled. If Armenia, or any part of the Turkish Empire, were attacked to-morrow, there would be no Power in Europe that was under any obligation to defend Turkey, because he did not think the reforms of the Turkish Government were such as would enable it to call upon England to fulfil the Anglo-Turkish Convention. Of course, there was all the difference in the world between a Treaty of guarantee and a Treaty not of guarantee. The Treaty of Vienna, for instance, was a Treaty of settlement; but it was not a guarantee. The Government might make a settlement which they did not bind themselves to support by engagement. Whether the Treaty of 1856 was a Treaty of guarantee or not had been very much in dispute. In the 7th clause there were the words—

> "Their Majesties engage each on his part to respect the territorial independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire guarantee in common the strict observance of this engagement; and will regard its violation as a question of general interest."

There were no words of that kind in the Treaty of Berlin. But the Tripartite Treaty was far more express. It was in every sense a Treaty of guarantee—

> "The High Contracting Parties guarantee jointly and severally the independence and integrity of the Turkish Empire in accordance with the Treaty of Paris."

In the Second Article it was stated—

> "Any infraction of the stipulations of the said Treaty will be considered by the Powers as a *casus belli*,"

and so on. That was a guarantee. He would like, therefore, to ask how the obligations under that Treaty were terminated? The noble Lord used language of a not very accurate description. He said—"We substituted for those engagements the Anglo-Turkish Convention." "We" could not do anything of the kind. Everybody knew that the Tripartite Treaty did not leave it to one Power to go and alter it without the consent of the others. The first question, therefore, he (Sir William Harcourt) would ask was, Did the Tripartite Treaty still exist since the Treaty of Berlin? Was it an obligation upon the parties? Could we call upon Austria and France to fulfil it? And could Austria and France call upon us to fulfil its obligations? The noble Lord the Vice President of the Council said we could not. He (Sir William Harcourt) wished to have the assurance of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the noble Lord was right. If that was so, he would like to know at what period, and in what documents, those obligations were cancelled? Nothing was said about the Tripartite Treaty in the Treaty of Berlin. The document referred to in the Third Article of the Treaty of Berlin was the general Treaty. If that were the case, he would like to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it would be taken generally that the effect of the Treaty of Berlin was to dissolve the obligations of the Treaty of 1856, and to substitute in their place, as the noble Lord the Vice President of the Council said, the Anglo-Turkish Convention? If, again, that were so, he would like an explanation of what was the particular view taken in the 63rd Article of the Treaty of Berlin, by which it was thought desirable to recite the Treaties of 1856 and 1871 — that was to say, the general Treaty of 1856 and the Treaty of 1871— and to say that except so far as they were modified by that Treaty they would still apply. Of course, those words were susceptible of one construction, and that was the construction denied by the noble Lord. A lawyer would understand them to mean that they were a saving clause of the Treaty of 1871. The noble Lord knew better than that. He (Sir William Harcourt) had supposed that, though the Turkish Empire had been diminished, still it was intended that the old guarantees should be revived and applied to what remained. He need not say that a view of that kind would be entirely inconsistent with the statement of the noble Lord the Vice President of the Council. This was a question of most serious importance; it was a question of peace or war, and affected the well-being of this country in relation to other States, and it was therefore necessary that they should know whether the Treaty of 1856 and the Tripartite Treaty were in force or not. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer would tell them that the Government accepted the statement of the noble Lord, he, for one, would be satisfied; because then, at last, they would get rid of those European guarantees in which they had been embarrassed with reference to Turkey in Europe, with reference to our engagements in regard to Asiatic Turkey and the Anglo-Turkish Convention. He (Sir William Harcourt) had never been anxious about the last, because the conditions had never arisen under which we should be compelled to it. He took this opportunity of enabling the Chancellor of the Exchequer to deal with the matter, because he thought it of too great importance for a simple question and answer. He did not appeal to his hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General, or, in other words, from one Member of the Government not in the Cabinet to another Member of the Government not in the Cabinet. He wished to know whether or not the Cabinet accepted the noble Lord's view of the Treaty? That was a question of the highest politics. It was a question of where England stood as respected her liabilities under these Treaties, and how Europe was affected by them. He therefore trusted that he might have an answer which could be accepted as the view of the Government.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir John Holker) said, he could assure his hon. and learned Friend (Sir William Harcourt) he was not particularly desirous of taking the responsibility from the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but, as it appeared to his right hon. Friend that this was essentially a legal question, and depended upon the construction of legal documents, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had done him the honour to ask him to answer the question. And, first, he must express his regret if his absence from the House had occasioned his hon. and learned Friend the slightest inconvenience, as it was not intended in any discourteous sense. Now, whatever they might think of this question—whether it was useful and opportune at that moment to raise it or not—they must be filled with admiration at the great industry and diligence of his hon. and learned Friend, who, among his multifarious avocations, could find time to read all the speeches of Members of the Government, whether Members of the Cabinet or not, delivered in or out of Parliament. He could only come to the conclusion that his hon. and learned Friend did that because he was sincerely and honestly desirous of obtaining considerable information. He dared say, also, that his hon. and learned Friend had a lurking idea that from some of those speeches he might extract not only information, but matter which would enable him to achieve a triumph, if only a temporary triumph, either over the person who had delivered the speech, or Her Majesty's Government. He (the Attorney General) could quite imagine the delight which filled the heart of his hon. and learned Friend when, having got from the speech all the information he could, and it was abundant, he hit upon the idea that, perhaps, there was something in it not precisely accurate, upon which he would be able to found the basis of a discussion in Parliament. What did his noble Friend the Vice President of the Council say? His noble Friend was not speaking as though he was arguing in a Court of Law; he was addressing a Conservative association, and, no doubt, intended to speak in a practical manner. There were certainly Treaties made with reference to Turkey, and guarantees were given of the integrity of the Turkish Empire. One of these Treaties was very difficult of construction—the Treaty of Paris of March, 1856—and there was another Treaty of 1856, to which the "Three Powers" were parties, called the Tripartite Treaty. Afterwards, in 1871, when circumstances altered somewhat, all the Powers thought it right to annul portions of the Treaty of Paris, and, by mutual consent, to allow portions of that Treaty to be disregarded altogether. Now, let the House consider what had been the opinion of the great Liberal Party with respect to those Treaties; because when people made speeches before Conservative associations or audiences, they had a right to bear in mind not only the arguments of the Government, or Members of the Government, but also what had been said on the other side. He had observed that his hon. and learned Friend, for whose knowledge of the law generally, and especially of the law relating to our relations with foreign Powers, he had the greatest respect, had studiously avoided expressing any opinion of his own on the subject, and had contented himself with attacking the noble Lord the Vice President of the Council. He would have been delighted to hear his hon. and learned Friend on that question. He had commented on the views of the Government; but so far from expressing his own opinion on the subject —and no man was more competent to form an opinion—he had been wholly silent. However, the other Members of the Liberal Party had not all of them been equally reticent. They had declared, over and over again, that the Treaty of Paris and the Tripartite Treaty had gone long ago; that circumstances had altered; and that the alteration of circumstances had dissipated the Treaties. When Russia thought proper, in the year 1876, to make war on Turkey, there were several considerable discussions—most interesting and animated discussions—in the House. Some hon. Members had, indeed, ventured to suggest that there were Treaties in existence; but the reply of the other side was that the circumstances of 1876 differed from those of 1856, and that the operation of circumstances had obliterated the Treaty. That was the argument put forward by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen of great experience and knowledge—in fact, by the Liberal lawyers—and listened to by his hon. and learned Friend with the utmost complacency. Dealing with the question as a lawyer, he (the Attorney General) should have thought that such doctrines, coming even from his associates, would have made the hair of his hon. and learned Friend stand on end. But it had been asserted broadly, by Member after Member of the Liberal Party, that, owing to the operation of circumstances, the Treaty of Paris and the Tripartite Treaty, and the Treaty of London into the bargain, were all entirely done away with, and that view had not been dissented from by the hon. and learned Gentleman, nor did they hear even the faintest groan of discontent from him. That was the view taken in Scotland as well as in England and the House, and represented to the world as the correct one. If that was so, could they find much fault with an hon. Member who, not being a lawyer, took not the strictly legal, but the practical view of the case, which had been assented to by the Liberal Party? It seemed to him that the noble Lord the Vice President of the Council, when he delivered his speech to the Conservative Association of the University of Edinburgh, took the view that, practically, the Tripartite Treaty was thrown into the shade, and that, for practical purposes, the Convention between Great Britain and Turkey had taken its place. No doubt, there had been alterations in circumstances; and if there had been such alterations before the war of 1876 as would abrogate a Treaty—if such a doctrine could prevail—there had been plenty of such changes since. He (the Attorney General) did not say or think, however, that that was a correct view of the case, but in dealing with such a subject he was bound to treat it in a lawyer-like manner; and, treating it so, the position of things was exceedingly plain. No Power having entered into a Treaty could abrogate it, except with the consent of all the other Powers. That was the doctrine recognized in 1871, when, as some people thought, very unfortunately for us, the Treaty of Paris was altered or abrogated, and it was regarded as a sound doctrine in law that without the consent of all the contracting Powers a Treaty could not be altered. So with regard to the Tripartite Treaty, which existed with the consent of Austria, France, and England. It might be, perhaps, not probable that either of the contracting Powers would be called upon to fulfil its provisions; but, as far as the law was concerned, he said, without fear of contradiction, that that Treaty was still in force—was still in existence. As far as the Treaty of Paris was concerned, the matter seemed even more abundantly clear; because, when the Great Powers who were parties to it in 1856 came to make the Treaty of Berlin, they studiously preserved by the 63rd Article the Treaty of Paris in all its provisions, except only those which had been abrogated or altered expressly by the terms of the Treaty of Berlin. Practically, then, the noble Lord was not very far wrong when he came to the conclusion that the Tripartite Treaty had been thrown into the shade, although, as a matter of law, it was evident that it still existed; and he, for one, repudiated the doctrine that Treaties could be altered, when entered into by the Great Powers, simply by circumstances, and without the consent of the high contracting parties.

Mr. CHILDERS said, that, in his opinion, the reply of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General was scarcely satisfactory. There were one or two apologies contained in it to which the attention of the House might very well be directed. In the first place, it should be observed that according to the Attorney General a Minister, however careful, usually need not be accurate in addressing a Conservative Association. In the second place, he told us that a statement affecting a most important Treaty, on which the affairs of Europe in the East hinged, might be legally incorrect, but practically correct. He wished, therefore, to learn from the Chancellor of the Exchequer—the view of the noble Lord the Vice President of the Council having been pronounced by the hon. and learned Gentleman to be practically correct, though legally incorrect — whether it was politically correct or not—that was to say, whether the Tripartite Treaty was or was not looked upon as binding by the Government? That was the important point; and, putting aside the nice distinctions between the practical and the legal, he wished to be informed what the actual political obligations of the country were held to be by the Cabinet.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, he must apologize to the hon. and learned Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt) for not having responded to his very pointed challenge to him to answer the questions which he had put to him. It seemed to him (the Chancellor of the Exchequer), however, without any disrespect to the hon. and learned Gentleman, that those questions really turned on the legal construction of important documents; and that it was, therefore, desirable that they should, considering the nature and importance of the subject, and the Assembly in which the question was put, receive an answer from one who was much better qualified than he could pretend to speak with authority on legal matters. His hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General had accordingly given what must be accepted as the legal view as to the present position of those important instruments, and done so, he thought, in a manner more advantageous to the House than if he himself had replied to the questions of the hon. and learned Gentleman. With regard to the questions put to him by the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Childers), he wished to say, in the first place, it was a little hard upon them that an observation should be made as though his hon. and learned Friend had said it was competent for the Ministry to make statements which were practically correct, though legally incorrect. He might, however, observe that his noble

Friend the Vice President of the Council was, in the speech to which attention had been called, commenting on the practical effects of certain doctrines, with regard to recent proceedings as to the Treaty of which he was speaking, laid down by high authorities, Members of the Party opposite, who had expressed the opinion that the results of those proceedings had been practically to supersede the Treaties made in 1856, and to put other arrangements in their place, by which the country was involved in greater responsibilities than before. His noble Friend, taking as a basis the statements so made —as was certainly within the scope of his argument—went on in his speech to show that, assuming that to be the case, our responsibilities as a nation were not increased, but in reality diminished. His noble Friend did not pretend to give a legal interpretation—and it was very important that should be borne in mind—because questions of the kind, when they arose, could not be settled by the *ipse dixit* of a subordinate Member of the Government, or by that of any Member of the Government, but by the true and proper construction of the instruments relied on—a construction which must be discussed by all those who were parties to the Treaty, and who might have a word to say and their own construction to put on the instrument. There was no doubt that there had been no formal abrogation of the Tripartite Treaty of 1856; neither, on the other hand, had there been a renewal of it. The Treaty of Berlin, to a very great extent, modified the Treaty of Paris of 1856, and the Tripartite Treaty was a sort of adjunct to the Treaty of Paris. It bound the three Powers who were parties to it to maintain the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and that was recorded at the time in the Treaty of 1856. The Berlin Treaty of 1878, after having largely modified the provisions of the Treaty of Paris, renewed and expressly maintained those portions of that Treaty which had been modified by the stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin. What was the effect, then, of the modification and the confirmation of the Treaty of Paris on the Tripartite Treaty? The Tripartite Treaty was not expressly mentioned in the Treaty of Berlin. He did not know that it could be. It was not expressly abrogated, nor yet was it expressly renewed, in view of the altered circumstances of Europe, and the Turkish Empire in particular, after the settlement of Berlin. Nothing had, in fact, passed on the subject between the three Powers; and the question what was the precise position of the Tripartite Treaty was one which must be determined by legal interpretations, upon which he should be sorry to pronounce *ex cathedra*. But the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Pontefract asked him whether the Government, apart from the legal or practical effect of the existing state of things, held the doctrine which was maintained by his noble Friend the Vice President of the Council to be politically correct—that was, he presumed, whether the Government considered that the general effect and upshot of the arrangements of the Treaty of Berlin had been such as to place the real and virtual responsibility of England on the footing which the noble Lord had described. His answer was that the Government accepted practically that view. They considered that the Tripartite Treaty had been, as his hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General had just said, thrown into the shade by the arrangements which had been made at Berlin. It was, he thought, highly improbable that that Treaty could be appealed to in support of the new arrangements that were made at Berlin; but he was far from saying that it might not be under other circumstances. Much, however, must depend on circumstances which might occur; and he should be sorry, indeed, to say what would be the effect of a Treaty which had not been abrogated in circumstances which it was extremely difficult to foresee. It was, he thought, wrong to call upon an English Minister to make a statement of the kind beforehand. His noble Friend was, in his opinion, however, perfectly right in arguing that the effect of what had been done had been in reality to diminish the liability of England. Instead of an indefinite engagement by which they might have been called upon by other Powers to defend the Turkish Empire in any part, the Government had undertaken a definite engagement, not an unconditional one, but one conditional upon the execution of certain reforms. They had undertaken it with reference to a particular portion of the Turkish Empire, and with the stipulation or condition that it should be in a case in which Turkey should be called upon to defend herself. These conditions did not exist in the Tripartite Treaty. Upon the whole, he maintained that the view expressed by his noble Friend in his speech at Edinburgh was practically and politically correct.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Committee *deferred* till *Monday* next.

SEED POTATOES (IRELAND) (*re-committed*) BILL—[Bill 68.]

(*Major Nolan, Mr. George Browne, Mr. P. J. Smyth.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Instruction to the Committee, That they have power to extend the provisions of the Bill to kinds of seed other than Potato seed.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 (Short title) *agreed to.*

Clause 2 (Application of Act).

Major NOLAN said, the Government had promised to accept this Bill on condition that certain Amendments proposed by them were inserted in it. He proposed, therefore, to insert the Amendment suggested by the Chief Secretary for Ireland in the Bill.

Mr. SHAW suggested that the benefits of Clause 6 should be extended to labourers who tilled small plots of land belonging to their employers. Unless that special provision was made, he was afraid they would hardly come within the strict definition of occupiers.

Mr. J. LOWTHER thought the suggestion well worth consideration, and it was one which, perhaps, would be most conveniently dealt with on the Report of the Bill.

Mr. SHAW observed, that it would be, of course, quite competent for the Committee to put in some words to that effect, and he would raise the question again at a future stage.

Mr. J. LOWTHER said, that would be the most convenient course; and if the question were so deferred, he would consider it in the interval.

Amendment *moved,* in page 2, line 11, after the words "seed potatoes," to insert the words "seed, oats, or other seed."—(*Major Nolan.*)

The Chancellor of the Exchequer

Amendment *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 3 (Powers of Guardians to borrow).

The CHAIRMAN said, that the money Resolutions had not yet been reported, and therefore it would be necessary, for the present, to postpone the next two clauses.

Mr. CHILDERS remarked, that he did not remember that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had yet stated what the amount of the loan would be.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER replied, that the aggregate amount would be about £500,000, and it was proposed that the money should be advanced from the Church Funds.

Clause *postponed.*

Clause 4 (Terms of loan) *postponed.*

Clause 5 (Orders for payments of loans may be made by Local Government Board) *agreed to.*

Clause 6 (Application of loans).

Amendment *moved,* in page 2, line 39, after the words "seed potatoes," to insert the words "seed, oats, or other seed."—(*Major Nolan.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

Major NOLAN said, the Amendment he was about to move was the only one as to which he had not come to a definite agreement with the Government. He proposed, at line 6, in page 3, to leave out the word "ten," in order that the word "twenty" might be inserted. He thought it right to say that he had not come to any definite agreement with the Government as to this Amendment; but it was the only one as to which they were not agreed, and he hoped that they might still see their way to accept it. He might add that he had no other Amendments to propose, except such as were already agreed to. When the original Bill was brought in the Chancellor of the Exchequer was good enough to say that the Government accepted the principle of the Bill with one or two unimportant reservations, and he hoped this would not be one of them. The object of his Amendment was to extend the power of the Guardians to sell seed. He knew many occupiers between £10 and £20 who certainly would find themselves in distressed circumstances, and would, he believed, be very glad to have power to buy seed. These people would not be able to obtain fresh seed for themselves, because the seed was sent from Dublin or Scotland in waggon loads of six tons at a time—a quantity which was quite beyond their reach. Of course, they might be able to get it from the local seed dealers; but, on the other hand, these occupiers would have far more confidence in the magistrates and Guardians. It would be unwise to give seed to such persons as these; while, on the other hand, they would be the very persons to whom it should be sold in accordance with the provisions of the Bill, because they would be the first to set an example to others how to pay. The effect of a certain number of people in the district paying up readily would have a very good effect; and for this reason alone the Bill might fairly be extended to persons holding land valued at more than £10.

Major O'BEIRNE wished to support the Amendment, because he found, on looking over the Agricultural Statistics for the year 1878, that by far the largest number of holdings were of 30 acres and under, while, on the other hand, potatoes were by far the largest crop grown. It was in the proportion of 3 to 1; and, therefore, he thought it was only fair that the Amendment should be accepted.

Mr. J. LOWTHER said, originally a distinction was drawn between occupiers and owners. The Government had now undertaken to re-consider that proposition, in order still further to meet the objects of the Bill. Now, the hon. and gallant Member for Galway (Major Nolan) proposed to abolish the distinction between occupiers above £10 and occupiers below it, so that both would stand upon an equal footing. But, surely, the line must be drawn somewhere? While the hon. and gallant Member for Galway drew it at £20, the hon. and gallant Gentleman who had last spoken wanted to draw it at £30. [Major Nolan: No; 30 acres.] Well, that would probably give a value of over £20, and that showed the difficulty of agreeing on a fixed point. Of course, this was not a Party question; but, still, he presumed that they were all agreed that there was some point at which a limit must be placed. Upon careful consideration the Government had agreed that the limit proposed was the most reasonable one; for, of course, they could not undertake to supply seed to the whole of Ireland. He hoped the Committee would see that the proposition in the Bill was a fair and reasonable one.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN pressed the Government very strongly to accept the Amendment. There were two or three farmers in his own immediate neighbourhood holding land of the value of between £10 and £20 whose potato crops had been a total failure, who had no money to pay their rent, and who, therefore, were actually in a worse position than some of their poorer neighbours. He did not think the Amendment would make any great difference to the Government, for the number of holdings between £10 and £20 was not very large; while, on the other hand, the concession would be of very great advantage to these poor people.

Mr. MELDON observed, that there was one point to which he wished to direct particular attention. Quite irrespective of the relief of the existing distress, any legislation which would lead to the introduction of new potato seed into Ireland would be of the very greatest benefit. The want of fresh seed was the cause of much of the distress and of the blight and bad potato crops; and it was so patent that the introduction of new seed was absolutely necessary, that he hoped that as the question of increasing the facilities for obtaining seed on favourable terms under the Bill was hanging in the balance the Government would be influenced in their decision by the consideration of the enormous advantage that would be conferred on Ireland by the general introduction of fresh seed.

An hon. Member desired to corroborate what had been said with regard to the necessity of new potato seed; and if the Government could stretch a point with a view to encouraging the introduction of fresh seed, they would confer a greater benefit on the country than, perhaps, anything else. An illustration would show what curious ideas still existed among the Irish people. He asked a tenant of his whether he ever changed his seed? The man replied that he did not; but that one year he used dung for manure, and the next sea sand. He most strongly supported the Amendment, because he was sure that the result would be to confer a benefit upon

Ireland, the effect of which would be felt for years to come.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, it would, no doubt, be a most advantageous thing for Ireland if they could supply the whole country with a fresh stock of seed; but they must measure their actions by what they had the power to do. It must be remembered that they had already, by the propositions contained in this Bill, incurred a liability of at least £500,000. It must also be borne in mind that the effect of purchasing large quantities of seed, to be sold to the people on extremely lenient terms, must be to considerably increase the price of seed to other persons. The further they went, and the more the Government took upon itself the onus of the first expenditure on providing seed, and offering it to occupiers of land on the terms proposed by the Bill, the more the price of seed was likely to be raised against the purchasers of potato seed, on their own account, either in Ireland itself, or in other parts of the United Kingdom. That was a point which they were obliged to keep within view. They knew what they were now proposing to do for the smallest class of owners; and to carry that undertaking further than the real necessity of the case demanded, was to incur a very serious responsibility indeed. In making this provision for the small class of occupiers, who were really not in a position to procure seed for themselves, they were justified in their acts by the facts already known to them. But, on the other hand, he did not think they would be justified in extending the measure further than was at present proposed in the Bill.

MR. SHAW said, the Government had met them so reasonably in regard to this Bill, that nothing would be further from their wish than to put pressure upon them. He hoped, therefore, that they would not be driven to a division. There was a great deal of force in what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said. This was a Bill for the purpose of helping small tenants and small farmers. Of course, if they went further they would always be sure to find plenty of men in great distress who would be very glad to purchase seed for their land from the Government on these favourable terms. He would, therefore, suggest to the Government that they should make the limit £15 instead of £10. It would not increase the number of persons benefited very much, nor would it increase, to any considerable extent, the responsibilities of the Government; while, on the other hand, it would in some parts of the country very decidedly increase the benefits of the Bill. In the South of Ireland, for instance, there were a very great many farmers cultivating something between 20 acres and 25 acres of land, the value of which was certainly under £15; while in the West of Ireland, on the other hand, there were a very large number of farmers whose holdings were under £10. He hoped his hon. and gallant Friend would consent to vary his Amendment to the extent he had suggested.

MR. GOULDING pressed the Government to make the limit £20. There were many persons, to his certain knowledge, with holdings of the value of both £10 and £15, especially in Galway and Mayo, to whom it would be their duty to give seed, for they would never be able to find the seed for themselves?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: This is a subject of very great importance, and, at the same time, of very great difficulty. We have been for some weeks in communication with the highest authorities in Ireland, and with persons well acquainted with agriculture, on the subject, and I should not at all like to make any alteration in the amount at which we have arrived, after very full consideration, without time for consultation with those by whom we have, in a great measure, been guided. If the hon. and gallant Gentleman will withdraw his Amendment, and allow £10 for the present to stand in the Bill, we will on Monday announce whether we can consent to raise the sum to £15.

MAJOR NOLAN hoped the Government by Monday or Tuesday would see its way not merely to a sum of £15, but would also accept his original Amendment of £20. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw), who was better acquainted with the subject than anybody else in the House, had strongly supported the proposal for £20.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MAJOR NOLAN moved, in page 3, line 7, to leave out the words "a half," in order to insert the word "an." The effect of this Amendment was to raise the quantity of seed which the Guardians were authorized to sell to a quantity sufficient for one acre, instead of half an acre.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE CHAIRMAN declared that the Ayes had it.

MR. J. LOWTHER: Oh! no; I accepted the Amendment.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is too late now. I declared that the Ayes had it, and no one challenged my decision.

MAJOR NOLAN said, it did not matter. He would propose instead, after the word "acre," in line 7, the words "or an acre." Then on the Report they could strike out the words "a half acre."

Amendment *agreed to.*

MAJOR NOLAN moved, in page 3, line 1, after the words just inserted, to add these words—

> "Of seed oats or other seed sufficient to sow another acre of land, statute measure, provided that the total cost of such seed shall not exceed £5 for any one occupier."

MR. W. H. SMITH said, he supposed the intention of his hon. and gallant Friend was that the amount sold to each occupier should not be greater than £5. The clause, as now amended, might read that the total amount which the Guardians were authorized to sell was £5.

MAJOR NOLAN said, the Chief Secretary for Ireland had gone over the Bill very carefully with him, and he thought the words would scarcely bear the construction just suggested. If, however, there were any mistake, it could easily be remedied on the Report.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY wished to propose, as a further Amendment, to insert before the words "five pounds," the words "together with such quantity of artificial manure as may be considered necessary." He proposed this Amendment, because it would be quite useless to give tenants—in the West of Ireland, at any rate—seed potatoes of a high quality, and not to give them at the same time artificial manure to use with them. There were a great number of tenants who did not require anything like the quantity of potatoes sufficient for an acre, or even half-an-acre of land; but he would give them such an amount of artificial manure as would really fertilize the crop. He was quite certain that if they gave these people potatoes without any manure the seed would be only wasted, for at present they had no means of really using it to advantage. So long as the amount of the grant was kept within the limit of £5, he did not see why the people should not have that done for them which was most beneficial to them.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Is it, Sir, within the Instruction to the Committee as to the Bill that this Amendment should be inserted? I doubt whether we can insert this Amendment.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Amendment proposed by the hon. and gallant Member is, after the words just inserted, to insert these words—

> "And seed, oats, or other seed sufficient to sow another acre of land, statute measure, provided that the total cost of such seed shall not exceed £5 for any one occupier."

The Amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Galway (Mr. Mitchell Henry) is after the word "seed" to insert these words—

> "Together with such quantity of artificial manure as may be considered necessary, provided," &c.

The objection taken is that there is no provision in the Bill or the Instruction for lending money for other purposes than seed, and that this Amendment is outside the Instruction given to the Committee. The Instruction given to the Committee is one extending the operation of the Bill to other classes of seed only. I think, therefore, that the objection, technically, is correct, and that any proposition to include a loan for the purpose of purchasing artificial manure cannot be entertained. The point is a very small one; but I am obliged to rule in favour of the objection, because there can be no doubt that the object of the Instruction, as well as of the Bill, is merely to provide loans for the purpose of purchasing seed.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY suggested that the object of the Bill was not merely to provide seed, but to take care that the seed was vitalized—that it might grow and become reproductive. They did not desire merely to provide potatoes to rot.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Under that construction, we might provide forks and spades also.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that I cannot put that Amendment, and that I must put the Amendment originally proposed.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY complained that the House generally, and private Members especially, who were interested in this Bill, had had very little opportunity of considering it. There seemed to be some private compact between two or three Members and the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and the rest were to have no opportunity of considering it. The Bill was only distributed two or three hours before they went into Committee. It dealt with matters of the most extreme importance, and he considered it had not been dealt with properly. On so serious a subject the Irish Members were entitled to have full time to consider the provisions of this Bill. Instead of that being given to them, some private arrangement had been made between one or two hon. Gentlemen and the Chief Secretary.

MAJOR NOLAN remarked that, during the recent debate on Free Trade, he saw two Colleagues representing the town of Leeds advocating entirely different views. One proposed one course of policy, only to hear his Colleague and brother Member immediately afterwards pointing out that that policy was entirely wrong. They remained, however, very good friends in spite of that. It was still more important that he and his hon. Colleague who had just spoken should not have any difference of opinion on this point. It was no secret that in the debate which took place a day or two previously several hon. Members declared that a Bill which merely gave a loan to the tenant would be of no use, and that it would be necessary to make them a free gift. If he thought there was the slightest possibility of obtaining a free gift from the Government, he certainly should not have brought in this Bill. He had acted upon what he thought the Cabinet were likely to do. He judged the Government by the acts of previous Governments as well as their own; and he felt that if he brought in a Bill for a free gift there was not the slightest chance of its passing. He therefore brought in one which he thought they could get enacted before the time came when it was absolutely necessary that the seed should be sown. It was very painful for him to have to differ from any Member of his Party, because their objects were the same, and they were both alike anxious to provide seed for the tenants of Ireland in the best possible way. Possibly he and his hon. Friends had formed a different opinion about the means to be employed. He was sorry to differ as to means with any hon. Member on that side of the House, especially with any Irish Member; and he was still more pained that there should be any difference on this subject between himself and his hon. Colleague. He wished to explain, therefore, that he drafted the Bill in Dublin, and brought it in before he had any knowledge of what the Government were going to do, and it was printed before, as he believed, the Government even saw it. It turned out that they were drafting a Bill with the same central idea of lending money without interest through the Poor Law Unions, and of making the Poor Law Unions responsible for it. As to hurrying the Bill on, it undoubtedly had been hurried on; but, on the other hand, it was distributed more than two or three hours ago. It was distributed four or five hours ago; and Irish Members who had been waiting to help it on had had an opportunity of reading it, and it had received very considerable consideration. It was, as they all knew, of the greatest importance that this Bill should be pressed on, for the reason that the planting of potatoes began about the 10th or the 15th of March, and in the South of Ireland still earlier. It must be remembered that they had not merely to finish the Bill, but they had to give the Guardians of the poor time to consider it, and to order potatoes from Scotland. In this case, therefore, speed was not hurry, and there was no reason why they should not get the measure through Committee in four or five hours. He did hope that no Member would delay the progress of the Bill. He quite admitted that if his hon. Colleague had drafted the Bill it would have been much better as a Bill; but he (Major Nolan) thought that his own had a better chance of passing. It was far more important that the people should get the seed than that they should discuss what was the best way in which they should get it, and the question of re-payment was a very small one.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY did not see any necessity for this sudden outburst of affection for himself on the part of his hon. and gallant Colleague, for he had no controversy with his hon. and gallant Friend. The object which they all had in view was to make the best Bill possible. It seemed that, according to the Bill, they could not give the small tenants who were to have the seed the fertilizers which would make it useful. The fact that he was defeated in his attempt to move a useful Amendment merely on a technical point was very strong evidence of the injudicious way in which this business had been managed. He would have suggested this Amendment before if he had seen the Bill earlier; but if it could now be introduced in any way it would be quite satisfactory. Would it be possible to move words on the Report which would result in effecting what he desired?

Amendment *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 7 (Recovery of price from purchasers).

MAJOR NOLAN moved the omission of the words "within two months," in order to insert the words "at the same time as the first ordinary rate for the relief of the poor made in the unions."

MR. MITCHELL HENRY considered this provision for the re-payment by small tenants of the amount of the cost of seeds to be exceedingly injudicious. The clause provided that tenants should make this re-payment in money; but it was well known that they lived upon their potatoes and did not sell them. The seed which would be given to them, and which would germinate, would, therefore, never be turned into money at all. In those circumstances, he was at a loss to know whence the tenants could get the money to repay the loans, which were recoverable, in the most stringent manner, through the Courts of Session, which would subject the tenants to the seizure of their chattels. They were already in debt to their landlords, and still further in debt to the shopkeepers, and Her Majesty's Government were now going to tie another mill-stone of debt around their necks; the result would be that a great many tenants would fail to repay the amounts as they became due. The Government were inducing charitable persons to give food to the poor tenants; and why, under these circumstances, they should not give them small quantities of seed potatoes and oats, necessary to supply them with food during the next year, he could not imagine. When seed was sent from this country to France, the French tenants were not asked for re-payment. It appeared to him that the supply of seed ought to be distributed entirely as a gift; and if it were given through relief committees—through clergymen in the various districts, or through landlords who would take charge of it—the seed would not be misapplied, and the tenants would not need this obligation to be placed upon them of re-paying the cost, which would only add to the debt by which they were already weighed down. He quite agreed that the Bill should be passed without unnecessary delay; but he could not see that a few hours spent by hon. Members in consultation would make any difference whatever: for, as it was, the Committee had no opportunity of making the measure such as it ought to be.

THE O'DONOGHUE suggested that the clause should be amended, so that discretion might be left to the Guardians to consider the circumstances of each person to whom advances were to be made.

MR. J. LOWTHER said, that, of course, the Boards of Guardians had specific power to recover the amounts due. The hon. Member for Galway (Mr. Mitchell Henry), taking exception to this clause, referred to the gifts of seed mad to the French peasantry. He (Mr. J. Lowther) would remind the hon. Member that these were gifts which came from private sources, and stood upon an entirely different footing to advances made by the State. Her Majesty's Government did not propose to pauperize the people; they only desired to afford them some assistance, making, at the same time, provision for the re-payment of the cost.

Amendments made.

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 8 (Power of entry and inspection).

MR. MITCHELL HENRY moved that this clause, which he considered to be of the most harassing and unreasonable kind, be omitted. It appeared to him that the Bill had been drawn by someone who had a complete mistrust of the Irish tenantry; and he could not conceive why the clause had been so framed, knowing, as he did, the dislike and the fear which the small tenants in Ireland had for the visits of officials upon their farms. The words of the clause were these—

> "When any seed has been sold under this Act to any occupier of land in any Union, any of the Guardians of the Union, or any person nominated by the Guardians, or by the Local Government Board, may, at all reasonable times, enter into and examine any land occupied by such occupier, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the seed sold to such occupier has been properly sown by him."

This power had no limitation whatever, and the individual nominated by the Board of Guardians, or the Local Government Board, might enter as often as he liked. But how could it be ascertained whether the seed had been properly sown, except by digging it up? The person nominated might, under this clause, proceed to annoy the tenant. Let the Committee remember that this provision of seed would be useful to some of the most miserable cottiers on the face of the earth—to people who cultivated little patches of land, and who would sow the seed given to them, taking care of it in a way that large farmers had no notion of. They were going to take with these poor people all the precautions which might more properly be applied to those who were about to be entrusted with great property. The rest of the clause, also, appeared to him to be exceedingly objectionable, and was as follows:—

> "If any person refuses to a Guardian or other person acting in execution of this Act admission to any land which such Guardian or person is entitled to enter or examine, or obstructs or impedes him in so entering or examining, the person so offending may be prosecuted in a summary manner, according to the provisions of the Petty Sessions (Ireland) Act 1851, and any Act amending the same, and on conviction shall be liable to a fine not exceeding £5."

Why, the tenant was, probably, not worth 5*d.* or 5*s.* in money, and would lose his whole substance if he should obstruct this needless examination of his crops. He considered the clause unworthy of the Bill, and that it would have the effect of making it most unpleasant for the tenants of Ireland.

Moved, to omit the clause.—(*Mr. Mitchell Henry*).

MR. J. LOWTHER said, that the provision was simply made in order that persons should not be able to avail themselves of the bounty of Parliament for the purposes of fraud. There was no idea whatever of instituting this wonderful organ of oppression referred to by the hon. Member for Galway.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 9 (Summary recovery of price of seed).

MR. MITCHELL HENRY equally objected to this clause. As a matter of fact, he objected to the Bill altogether, but especially to this clause as it stood, which gave the Guardians of the Union power to proceed before justices of petty sessions for the recovery of amounts claimed. In this case, the sum of £2 was mentioned; but he had already explained to the Committee that the tenants would not have £2 to pay. They had no means of turning their potatoes into money in the West of Ireland, where they did not sell their potatoes at all, but put them up into pits, keeping them for food during the year. They were about to give to the Guardians the strongest power known to the law for the recovery of these debts, and the clause, in his opinion, appeared to be most arbitrary.

MAJOR NOLAN was glad to accept the responsibility of this clause. The Committee would remember that the Boards of Guardians had to be persuaded to exercise their powers, and it was therefore necessary to give them the greatest possible facility for recovery. They must have facilities for the recovery of the debts, or they could not be expected to give the seed.

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 10 (Powers of Local Government Board where Guardians make default) *agreed to.*

Clause 11 (Saving for other remedies) *agreed to.*

Clause 12 (Repayment of loans made by the Board of Works).

MR. CHILDERS said, this clause involved a financial question to which he desired to draw the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the

Exchequer. He suggested that a clause should be inserted carrying out the same provisions with regard to the remitted interest appearing as a charge on the Revenue of the year as in the India Bill of last year, when money, as in this instance, was advanced by the Exchequer without interest.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER quite understood the point raised by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Pontefract (Mr. Childers), which should receive his consideration.

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 13 (Confirmation of expenditure by Guardians, and indemnity).

MR. J. LOWTHER moved to insert, in page 5, line 32, the words "Local Government Board" after the word "Guardians."

MR. MITCHELL HENRY believed that there would exist at all times difficulties with the Boards of Guardians in Ireland as to whether they would carry out the provisions of the Bill. He believed that the provisions of the Bill would not be carried out in many cases, and that the Guardians would not make use of the powers given to them, because the inducements to do so were not sufficient. He wished to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Lowther) whether it was proposed to compel the Boards of Guardians to do so?

MAJOR NOLAN said, if his Colleague (Mr. Mitchell Henry) would look to Clause 2, he would see that this point had already been provided for, and that the Local Government Board might require the Boards of Guardians to put into force the provisions of the Act. As a matter of fact, this was doubly provided for in the Bill.

MR. MELDON wished to utter one word of warning with regard to the seed to be sown. As soon as it was known that seed was wanted, a large number of charitably disposed people would, no doubt, volunteer to sell, at the best possible price, potatoes for seed. Care should be taken that no seed should be purchased except such as was suited to the Irish climate. There was a talk of importing seed potatoes from America. He ventured to say that if that was done the result would be simply ruinous to the next year's crop, and that entire failure would follow from planting such seed. He believed himself that Scotch potatoes were the best suited for planting in Ireland; and it would certainly be the duty of the Local Government Board, in sending out their Circular to the Guardians, to call attention to this very important point. If unsuitable seed was sown, the result would be disastrous; for the farmers would lose their crops, and the Guardians the advances they had made. He hoped the Government would consult persons of experience and knowledge on this point, and take care that no mischief was done by providing seed potatoes not likely to suit the soil and climate of Ireland. It was unfortunate, also, that hon. Members generally had not had an opportunity of looking over and thoroughly considering this Bill. Things done in a hurry were seldom well done. He had not had any opportunity of examining the provisions of the Bill, except during the past few minutes; but it had occurred to him that an indirect result of the measures which the Government and the hon. and gallant Member had brought in might be to disfranchise all those who took advantage of the relief to be afforded. The hon. and gallant Member for Galway should see to the matter so far as the present Bill was concerned, and have it made clear that under the Registration of Parliamentary Voters' Acts the acceptance of relief under the Bill would not be held to disfranchise an elector. He was sorry also that the penal clauses were inserted.

MAJOR NOLAN undertook, if the hon. and learned Member who had just spoken would prepare a clause dealing with this last point, to bring it up on the Report. He did not think the matter affected himself personally, because nobody under £10 had a right to vote. Still, the clause would be very useful in preventing any question on the point. He believed it would be necessary to report Progress after this clause, unless there was means of bringing up the Report on the money clauses. If that could be done, of course it would much facilitate Business.

MR. J. LOWTHER said, that in the Circular now in course of preparation a warning would be inserted to cultivators with regard to the seed that should be sown. Of course, it would be improper, in any suggestions offered on this clause, to advise the use of any one particular class of seed exclusive of others, except with a view of affording facilities for the dissemination of seeds of various kinds. The hon. and learned Member had alluded to American potatoes. This was probably a question upon which Home Rule would not be a very popular cry; for he believed they were all a greed that potatoes other than Irish were what ought to be sown. He hoped the advice given in the Circular would be sufficient to prevent error on this point. He believed it would not be possible to take the Report on the money clauses that night, and therefore it would be necessary to report Progress.

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY asked whether the right hon. Gentleman, or those who were responsible for this Bill, had calculated the quantity of seed potatoes which would actually be required, or was likely to be required? If this Bill was to be made of any practical use, there would be the greatest difficulty in procuring seed potatoes in the proper quantity; and, as a consequence, they would have a series of jobs and speculations as to the supply of seed, which would deprive this measure of half the benefit it was intended to confer upon the tenants. Half the benefit to be derived from this measure was, that it would substitute new seed for the worn out seed which had so long been sown in Ireland. In his humble opinion, when the Government became aware of the great deficiency there would be in the supply of seed, they should, through agents, have purchased in various places, without giving notice to anybody, large quantities of the proper kind of seed. They could have done that in various ways, as on former occasions. For instance, they might have acted confidentially through some of the large seed merchants. There were many honourable firms, who, without disclosing the name of their purchaser, would have contracted for large quantities of the proper kinds of seed in different parts of the world. Or again, if they had put this matter into the hands of the Director of the Navy Contracts, he could easily have purchased large quantities of seed potatoes, and had them ready for distribution by this time. That was the reason why he objected to relieving the Government of their proper responsibility, which they, as Irish Members, had chosen to do by bringing in this Bill. If it produced evil, or, at any rate, did not accomplish all the good that was to be expected, the natural answer of the Government would be—"Why we adopted your own measure." He maintained that to prepare for this emergency was a duty incumbent on the Government; and that by the hon. and gallant Member rushing in with a ready prepared Bill, which the Government eagerly grasped at and adopted, they had placed themselves in a very false position. For his part, he wished to wash his hands of any responsibility for the Bill.

Mr. MELDON said, that with regard to the answer of his hon. and gallant Friend, that persons rated at less than £10 were not entitled to vote, he must call attention to the fact that the proposal was to extend the operation of the Bill on Report to persons rated at £15 or £20. Besides, it must be remembered that a person might be rated in respect to more than one holding, in order to qualify him for the franchise. It was necessary, therefore, to take care that people should not be disfranchised by taking advantage of the provisions of this Bill.

Amendment *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do now report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Major Nolan.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Monday* next.

SEED (IRELAND) [ADVANCES].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of any sums of money which may become payable under the provisions of any Act of the present Session to enable Guardians of the Poor to borrow money for the purpose of procuring Seed for Tenants in Ireland.

Resolution to be reported upon *Monday* next.

ALKALI ACTS AMENDMENT, &C. BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Sclater-Booth, Bill to amend the Alkali Acts 1863 and 1874, and to provide for the more effectual condensation of Noxious and Offensive Gases in Alkali and other works, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Sclater-Booth, Mr. Secretary Cross, Viscount Sandon, and Mr. Salt.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 74.]

POOR LAW GUARDIANS (IRELAND) (MINISTERS OF RELIGION) BILL.

On Motion of Lord EDMOND FITZMAURICE, Bill to remove the disqualification of Ministers of Religion in Ireland to be Poor Law Guardians, *ordered* to be brought in by Lord EDMOND FITZMAURICE, Mr. SHAW, and Mr. DENIS O'CONOR.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 75.]

House adjourned at a quarter before
One o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 16*th February*, 1880.

MINUTES.] — SESSIONAL COMMITTEES—Office of the Clerk of the Parliaments and Office of the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod; Committee of Selection on Opposed Private Bills; Standing Orders Committee on Private Bills, *appointed* and *nominated*.

PUBLIC BILL — *First Reading* — Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement (Scotland) Act (1875) Amendment * (8)

ARMY—PURCHASE OFFICERS' WIDOWS.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

THE EARL OF **MALMESBURY**, in rising to ask Her Majesty's Government, If it is their intention to return to the widows or children of officers killed in action during the late wars, and who had purchased their commissions, any part of the money so laid out by them under the past rules of the service? said, the hon. and gallant Member for Brighton (General Shute) brought forward this question in "another place" last Session after these wars had lasted 18 months. Now that they had lasted six months longer, it was only right to bring it under the notice of their Lordships. It had reference entirely to officers who purchased their commissions before the Rules of the Service in respect of commissions were altered to their present form. Officers were then obliged to purchase their commissions, or they could not receive due promotion and their juniors were promoted over their heads. This was a hard thing to bear to men who wanted to rise in their Profession, and many officers, therefore, spent all their means to purchase their commissions. Every possible excuse should be made for officers under these circumstances. He would not go into the question whether the old system was a good or a bad one. Many anomalies worked well in practice, and British officers, under the purchase system, nobly did their duty; but the system of retirement offered to the purchase officers made England a gambling table, at which the Government were the *croupiers* and the officers were the victims. With officers who had entered the Army since the Rules were changed the present question had nothing to do. Considering the enemies to whom they had been opposed in the late wars, and the number of battles in which they had been engaged, there had been an extraordinary number of officers killed. That circumstance it was for military men to explain; but there was this to be said—that they had shown the courage habitual to their race, and had proved it in every case. Parliament had abolished the old system and established a new one, and ought to take care that under the latter no injustice was suffered of the nature to which the Question referred. Under that system those who had purchased their commissions lost to their families the money so invested. It was on behalf of the widows and orphans, therefore, that he pressed the subject on the attention of their Lordships. They ought to have returned to them in such an event a portion of the money, or have the benefit of interest upon it. The noble Earl concluded by asking his Question.

VISCOUNT **BURY** observed, that the noble Earl who had put the Question to the Government had expressed the opinion that Her Majesty's Government ought to adopt a certain course in regard to the widows and orphans of officers who had fallen in action. He must remind the noble Earl that Her Majesty's Government could not exercise a discretion in this matter, and that all they could do was to act on the Royal Warrants which had been issued, and on the Code of Regulations in force. Their Lordships would remember that previous to the Crimean War the families of purchase officers killed in action lost the value of their commissions. In 1855, however, under Lord Panmure, a Royal Warrant was brought in, providing that if an officer was killed in action his widow should receive the purchase value of his commission, providing she was not in what might be called affluent circumstances; and, of course, the word "affluent" was distinctly defined for the information of the War Office, and a certain scale of income was laid down, within which a widow might receive the regulation money. Then, when the system of purchase was abolished, Lord Cardwell laid it down, in a very distinct manner, that officers should be placed in the same position after the abolition of purchase as they were in before that abolition—that they should be in no worse and in no better position in consequence of the abolition of purchase; and that the State and not the next senior officer succeeded to the vacant position. That canon, so laid down, had been acted on in several Royal Warrants issued since that time. Under those Warrants, when an officer was killed in action, and his widow was in indigent circumstances, she received either the regulation compensation for her husband's commission or a pension; but if her circumstances were such that she would not be eligible for a pension, then she would not be entitled to claim the value of her husband's commission. He quite admitted, with the noble Earl, that very great hardships frequently arose under those circumstances; but it was not a hardship which had been created by the present Government. They succeeded to it from their Predecessors, and their Predecessors also succeeded to it from former Governments. No substantial alteration had been made since Lord Panmure's Regulation in 1855, which was still in force. A great many cases had been already decided in accordance with the Regulation promulgated in that year; and if there were to be any modification now, it must be not only prospective, but retrospective, and cause considerable inconvenience. The question had been before his right hon. and gallant Friend the Secretary of State for War (Colonel Stanley), and he had consulted some of his financial Colleagues to see whether anything further could be done. Further than that he could not say; but there was every disposition to construe the law laid down for the guidance of the War Office in a manner that would afford the greatest consideration to the claims of the widows and children of officers.

Lord ELLENBOROUGH pointed out that it was a great anomaly, now that purchase was abolished, that, in the same regiment, one officer should be serving, having purchased, and the other not having done so. Thus the death of one officer might cause a great pecuniary loss; whilst, in other circumstances, the officer just having purchased, the widow and children of an officer killed in action might, in a pecuniary point, be benefited to the extent of the allowance or pension granted them. He trusted Her Majesty's Government would eventually see the way to, in some measure, modify this injustice.

ARMY — THE AUXILIARY FORCES — THE VOLUNTEER REVIEW.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

Lord CAMPBELL: My Lords, the Question I have given Notice of was put down in some degree to enable me to offer an opinion on a point—although it may not seem a very grave one—which much concerns a large branch of the Auxiliary Forces. The opinion has been based on long and personal experience, and it will not require many minutes to support it. As regards the great annual field days of the Volunteers, with which society is thoroughly familiar, we stand apparently in this way—For a few years, from different causes, they have gone into abeyance. It is now intended to revive them. There is a fresh departure on the subject. Different projects have been mooted. The Government are not committed yet to any. They are on the point, however, of declaring themselves. It is stated, in the ordinary channels of intelligence, that the local board of Aldershot have strongly urged the advantage of a field day at that place, in connection with the Aldershot Division. On the other hand, the Brighton Corporation, with a highly laudable regard to the gain of every publican in that considerable watering-place, are moving heaven and earth—at least, the Government and the Volunteer commanders—to restore the very thing which used to happen, and at the very time which used to be allotted to it. Before protesting, individually, against the gratuitous relapse, I wish to take advantage of the shelter which an eminent authority has given. General Sir Hope Grant, not many years back, presiding upon one of these occasions, reported to the Government against them. So great a soldier, and so eminent a character, officially explained to the Government that they ought not to be continued, because their inconveniences were greater than the benefit resulting from them. The exact view which swayed General Sir Hope Grant is beyond my recollection, as it is a long while since the document was promulgated. On this point, no doubt, the War Office are ready to enlighten us. But having myself been present as an auxiliary officer at nearly all of these parades, I can put before the House in a few words some grounds which justify a verdict so authoritative. One is that, at such an early time as Easter, parades on the sea-coast are threatened by the gravest interruption from the stormy weather which is not unlikely to prevail. A striking illustration of the hazard took place at Dover a few years back, and of course it might happen equally at Brighton, since Dover, although a favoured spot, has no monopoly of tempests. The brigades were formed on the sea-walk, and in a quarter of an hour the violence of the gale was such that they were actually dispersed by order. Had it not been for the activity of the illustrious Duke the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, who in the afternoon rode over, I believe, from Walmer Castle, some 20,000 men, at great expense to every regiment, would have come down from points much more remote than the Metropolis, for nothing but the spray which fell upon their uniforms. As it was, even the effort of the illustrious Duke, with all his aides-de-camp to back him, could only reassemble some half of the Force which had been scattered. There were commanders without regiments, field officers without horses, and horses without field officers. At that time the unanimous conclusion was that these annual parades, however excellent, ought never to be held again under such circumstances; that if they took place at Easter it ought not to be at the sea-coast; that if they took place on the sea-coast it ought not to be at Easter. If I am not mistaken, it was further on in time that General Sir Hope Grant explained the disadvantages of Brighton. One of them—whether it struck him or not—is absolutely fatal. You cannot keep the ground when you are followed for only two or three miles by so great a population. Discipline is lost and movements are confounded. I have seen under my own eyes, when forced to take a regiment there, the crowd pressing so close to the rear of the line, that there was no space to form a quarter distance, or, as it is now termed, a quarter column, when in order to return to Brighton such a movement was essential. There is another serious objection, which may have possibly escaped Sir Hope Grant, who went there rather as a critic of manœuvres. It is the bad effect on men in the ranks of loitering for many days without restraint or influence of any kind in a town so large and so accessible as Brighton; and where, indeed, the Railway Company allures them for a sojourn wholly irrespective of any military duty. It is a fact which often came before me that on the Easter Monday men who had been wearing uniforms for days before actually absented themselves—their zeal having evaporated in too long a holiday—while the burden of the day was borne by those who left their beds in the Metropolis at 4 or 5 o'clock, and thus showed that they were not in all respects unworthy of campaigning. But there is a grave objection to Easter Monday field days wherever you may hold them. No battalion drills precede them, because the season is too early for them. The Force is therefore unprepared. The excitement they involve makes it very difficult to get men to attend battalion drills for some weeks after they have happened. This objection would partly cease if a parade at Whitsuntide was allowed to follow that of Easter; while that of Easter took place in the interior and not upon the sea-coast. But we start at present from the given axiom that only one of any magnitude is contemplated. In that case, the conclusion I have long ago arrived at is that it ought to take place at Aldershot in combination with the Regulars, during the Whitsuntide Recess, when it is much easier to assemble men from different parts of the United Kingdom than at Easter. Some might think Shorncliffe more desirable. But where all may thoroughly unite is in deprecating the revival of what Sir Hope Grant officially condemned, partly on the grounds that gallant officer advanced, partly upon those which I have touched, without, of course, attempting to exhaust them. I will conclude by asking, Whether Her Majesty's Government proposes to sanction a Volunteer

Field Day at Brighton on Easter Monday?

VISCOUNT BURY: I need hardly remind your Lordships that the initiative with regard to these Reviews has by custom been long left to the commanders of the Volunteer Force themselves. The eloquent speech of my noble Friend ought, therefore, to have been addressed to the meeting of commanding officers, he himself being one, assembled to arrange for the Review. We have not at the War Office yet received any official intimation of the wish of the Volunteers to hold a Review this year at Brighton, although I believe it is their intention. After consultation with the illustrious Duke the Commander-in-Chief, it appears to the War Office that there is no sufficient reason, if they should ask, why they should not receive permission. With regard to the opinion of General Sir Hope Grant, quoted by my noble Friend, we do not think that a partial failure of a Review 12 years ago would be a sufficient reason for preventing the Volunteers mustering at Brighton. The choice of location is limited by two considerations—the first is, whether transport can be obtained; and the second, whether a suitable ground in connection with it can be had? Since Easter Monday became a Bank Holiday, the railway authorities have found it very difficult to transport a numerous body of Volunteers in addition to their holiday traffic; but, on this occasion, Mr. Knight, the officer at the head of the Brighton and South Coast Railway, has made great exertions to provide adequate means of transport; and I have reason to believe he will be able to overcome all difficulties if the Volunteers desire to be taken to Brighton. I am not aware of any other place where that could be the case; and the War Office does not feel in a position to refuse its consent if it is asked, as I hope it will be, and I trust that we shall see this year a Review on Easter Monday at Brighton.

OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENTS AND OFFICE OF THE GENTLEMAN USHER OF THE BLACK ROD.

Select Committee appointed: The Lords following were named of the Committee:

Ld. Chancellor.
Ld. President.
Ld. Privy Seal.
D. Saint Albans.
M. Lansdowne.
M. Salisbury.
M. Bath.
Ld. Steward.
Ld. Chamberlain.
E. Devon.

Lord Campbell

E. Doncaster.
E. Tankerville.
E. Carnarvon.
E. Bradford.
E. Granville.
E. Kimberley.
E. Sydney.
E. Redesdale.
V. Hawarden.
V. Hardinge.
V. Eversley.
L. Colville of Culross.
L. Monson.
L. Colchester.
L. Skelmersdale.
L. Aveland.

OPPOSED PRIVATE BILLS.

The Lords following; viz.,

M. Lansdowne.
L. Colville of Culross.
L. Boyle.
L. Skelmersdale.

were appointed, with the Chairman of Committees, a Committee to select and propose to the House the names of the five Lords to form a Select Committee for the consideration of each opposed Private Bill.

PRIVATE BILLS.

Standing Orders Committee appointed: The Lords following, with the Chairman of Committees, were named of the Committee:

D. Somerset.
M. Winchester.
M. Lansdowne.
M. Bath.
M. Hertford.
E. Devon.
E. Airlie.
E. Carnarvon.
E. Cadogan.
E. Belmore.
E. Chichester.
E. Powis.
E. Verulam.
E. Morley.
E. Stradbroke.
E. Amherst.
E. Sydney.
V. Hawarden.
V. Hutchinson.
V. Hardinge.
V. Eversley.
V. Halifax.
L. Camoys.
L. Saye and Sele.
L. Balfour of Burley.
L. Colville of Culross.
L. Boyle.
L. Monson.
L. Digby.
L. Colchester.
L. Silchester.
L. De Tabley.
L. Skelmersdale.
L. Sudeley.
L. Belper.
L. Ebury.
L. Egerton.
L. Hartismere.
L. Penrhyn.
L. Wolverton.

House adjourned at a quarter before Six o'clock, till To-morrow, half past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 16*th February*, 1880.

MINUTES.]—NEW MEMBER SWORN—Edward George Clarke, esquire, *for* Southwark.

PUBLIC BILLS—*Second Reading*—Beer Dealers' Retail Licences * [65]; Artizans' Dwellings Act (1868) Amendment Act (1879) Amendment * [63].

Committee—Relief of Distress (Ireland) [1]—R.P.; Ancient Monuments [51], [House counted out].

Committee—Report—Seed Potatoes (Ireland) (*re-comm*). [68].

Third Reading—Companies Acts Amendment * [52], and *passed*.

INDISPOSITION OF MR. SPEAKER.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, on account of indisposition: —Whereupon Mr. Raikes, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker, and after Prayers counted the House, and, Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order.

QUESTIONS.

CIVIL SERVICE WRITERS.

SIR JOSEPH M'KENNA asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, having reference to his observations at the close of last Session in respect to Civil Service writers, Whether any arrangement has been made, or is in contemplation, to improve the condition of that class of public servants?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, in reply, said, he did not recollect having made any observation last Session conveying the impression that arrangements were in contemplation to improve the condition of Civil Service writers. No such arrangements were in contemplation either last year or at present.

CYPRUS—THE ORDINANCES.

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, When his promise of placing in the Library the Ordinances of Cyprus will be acted upon?

MR. BOURKE, in reply, said, that all the Ordinances of Cyprus would in future be placed in the Library as soon as they were received by the Government.

ARMY—LONGFORD BARRACKS.

MR. ERRINGTON asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he will take advantage of this time of distress to undertake the long contemplated improvements in the barracks at Longford, and to increase, in accordance with his promise last year, the number of troops quartered in that town?

COLONEL STANLEY: Sir, only a limited amount of the funds at our disposal can be devoted to new married soldiers' quarters; and until those at Limerick are completed it is not probable that those at Longford can be undertaken. The claims of other Irish stations have also to be considered. With regard to the concluding portion of the hon. Member's Question, if he will refer to my answer to his Question on the subject, he will find that no promise was given of an increase to the number of troops quartered at Longford. What I then said was to the effect that when the promise was given, in 1878, that a detachment would be sent to occupy these barracks, it was given with the qualification "if possible;" that it was not then possible to do so, but that it would not be lost sight of. I can now only repeat the same answer. Owing to other requirements, there is at present no prospect of any immediate increase in the number of troops to be quartered at Longford.

INDIA—EMIGRATION OF COOLIES TO LA REUNION.

MR. ERRINGTON asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether it is true as recently stated that the Indian Government has been compelled to suspend the exportation of Coolies from India to the Island of La Réunion; and, if so, whether, by laying Papers upon the Table or otherwise, he can inform the House of the circumstances under which this step has been taken?

MR. E. STANHOPE: Sir, the Government of India did have it in contemplation last year to suspend the emigration to Réunion at the end of the year in consequence of certain evils brought to light by an International Commission of Inquiry. It has now been decided to continue the emigration, at any rate until October next; and, in the meantime, negotiations are taking place with the French Government with the view of remedying those evils. I think it would be premature to produce the Correspondence at present.

ARMY—THE ROYAL WARRANT, JULY, 1879—RESERVE OFFICERS.

COLONEL ALEXANDER asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is intended to publish the List of Reserve Officers formed under the Royal Warrant of July 1879?

COLONEL STANLEY, in reply, said, it was intended shortly to publish the list in question.

MASTERS IN LUNACY—APPOINTMENT OF MR. HENRY GRAHAM.

MR. ANDERSON asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If it be the fact that the Lord Chancellor lately appointed his private secretary a Master in Lunacy with a salary of £2,000 a-year; if it be the fact that the duty of a Master in Lunacy involves directing juries on some of the most difficult and delicate trials, such as those de Lunatico inquirendo, in which great experience, judgment, and knowledge of Law are required; and, if it be the fact that the gentleman appointed, although a Barrister, is not a practising Barrister, and has no special experience to qualify him for the post?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, the gentleman appointed by the Lord Chancellor to succeed Mr. Barlow as Master in Lunacy is Mr. Henry Graham, who for six years has filled the office, not of Private Secretary to the Lord Chancellor, but of Principal Secretary in the Lord Chancellor's Department. I have been requested by the Lord Chancellor to say that the office which Mr. Graham has thus vacated is one the holder of which must not only be a lawyer, but a lawyer of learning, accomplishment, and judgment. His duties and experience are of the most varied kind, and he is in constant communication with the different Departments of the Law, including the Department of Lunacy. By no one have the duties of this office been more ably and efficiently executed than by Mr. Graham. Mr. Graham was called to the Bar in 1868. At the time of his appointment as Principal Secretary he was in practice at the Assizes and Sessions; but his practice was, as is usual, put in abeyance upon his appointment. When Mr. Barlow resigned the Mastership in Lunacy, the Lord Chancellor, after offering the office to two members of the Bar, whose services he would have been glad to secure, conferred it upon Mr. Graham, and he did so merely because he considered that there was no one by whom the office was likely to be accepted who would more efficiently discharge its duties. These duties are mainly administrative. There are occasionally contested inquiries before a jury into sanity, over which one of the Masters in Lunacy presides. They are comparatively rare, and have not averaged two a-year since the Act of 1861. The Lord Chancellor considers that the "experience, judgment, and knowledge" of Mr. Graham are fully equal to the holding of these inquiries, and to the performing every other duty of the office.

TURKEY—HAFIZ PASHA.

MR. DILLWYN asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If he can state whether Hafiz Pasha, who is now the head of the Turkish police, is the same person referred to by name in Lord Derby's Despatch of the 21st of September 1876, and identical with the person mentioned in Mr. Baring's Report as being in command of troops who pillaged the town of Otlakeui, in Bulgaria, in the same year, when churches, schools, market places, and all the best houses were burnt, and the whole town plundered from one end to the other, on which occasion many women and children were killed and horrors perpetrated, over which Mr. Baring reported that he preferred to draw a veil; and, whether it is true that this person has lately been decorated by the Sultan with the order of the Medjidie of the First Class.

MR. BOURKE: I am sorry to say I have not seen the Report alluded to in the latter part of the Question. There can be no doubt whatever as to the indentity of the person, and I do not suppose that there can be any doubt as to the facts mentioned in the Question of the hon. Member.

Afterwards,

MR. RYLANDS said, with regard to the answer which the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had given to his hon. Friend (Sir Charles W. Dilke), he should be glad to know, Whether Her Majesty's Ambassador had been instructed to deliver any serious protest to the Porte regarding the onerous appointment given to a man who had been guilty of such great crimes?

MR. BOURKE, in reply, said, he would be very happy to answer the

Question, if the hon. Member gave him the usual Notice.

AFRICA (WEST COAST)—BOMBARDMENT OF ONITSHA.

MR. RICHARD asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If he will lay upon the Table of the House all the Papers relating to the action of Captain Easton in using the services of Her Majesty's ship the "Pioneer" to bombard and destroy the town of Onitsha?

MR. BOURKE, in reply, said, there would be no objection to produce these Papers.

INDIA—THE NAGA HILL TRIBES.

MR. DALRYMPLE asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether his attention has been called to the circumstances of a raid having been made on the 27th January by the Naga Hill tribes upon the Baladhun Tea Gardens in Cachar, when the manager of the gardens, Mr. Peter Blyth, was killed, and the houses on the estate were burnt; and, if he will instruct the Government of India to make full inquiry upon the subject?

MR. E. STANHOPE: Sir, we have no official information upon the subject at present. I gather from the newspapers that the police were in pursuit of the party that committed the raid, and I have no doubt that the Government of India have already taken such precautions as are possible to guard against the recurrence of such an event.

ARMY—COMMISSARIAT AND TRANSPORT DEPARTMENTS.

MR. O'CONOR asked the Secretary of State for War, When the long promised Warrant relating to the Commissariat and Transport Departments will be laid upon the Table of the House?

COLONEL STANLEY: Sir, I think it would be objectionable to lay on the Table, as a Parliamentary Paper, partly as a matter of precedent, and partly on account of the details set forth, the promised Warrant relating to the Commissariat and Transport Departments. But I have no objection to place a few copies of it in the Library; indeed, I believe it has already been done.

POST OFFICE—INVESTMENTS—SAVINGS BANKS.

MR. FAWCETT asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether it is the intention of the Government during the present Session to introduce any measure to afford greater facilities for the investment of small sums in Consols; and, whether any measure will be introduced to give further opportunities of making deposits in the Post Office Savings Banks?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, in reply, said, that both of these questions were under the careful consideration of the Government; but he was not able at that moment to give an answer with respect to the introduction of a Bill dealing with them.

IRELAND—"HOME RULERS" MEMBERS OF THIS HOUSE.

MR. SULLIVAN asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If it is intended to remove from the Roll of the Privy Council or the Commission of the Peace those right honourable and honourable gentlemen, Members of this House, who have supported the Motion for an inquiry into the Irish demand for a domestic Parliament, on the ground of such conduct involving on their part a failure in loyalty and duty towards their Sovereign and their Country?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER; Sir, I am not aware of its being intended to remove, either from the Privy Council or from the commission of the peace, any right hon. Gentlemen or hon. Gentlemen who are Members of this House.

POST OFFICE—THE NEW PENNY POSTAGE STAMP.

MR. THOMSON HANKEY asked the Postmaster General, If he can state why the new penny postage stamps have been made of a colour so near to that of the Foreign postage stamps as to lead to frequent mistakes?

LORD JOHN MANNERS: Sir, the colour in which the new penny postage stamp is printed was selected with a view to its being in accord with the colour suggested by the Postal Congress of Paris for the postage stamps of the value of 10 centimes (1*d.*) of all the countries within the Universal Postal

Union. The colour of the postage stamp of the value of 2½*d.* has, in consequence also of a suggestion made by the Postal Congress, been now changed to blue. There will, therefore, be no risk of such mistakes as those referred to.

Mr. THOMSON HANKEY asked, Whether he was to understand that in future the 2*d.* and the 2½*d.* stamps would be both blue?

Lord JOHN MANNERS, in reply, said, he had taken the hon. Member's Question to refer to the 2½*d.* stamp. That stamp was blue; and he understood it was issued to the public on the 5th of this month; but the hon. Gentleman might have found some of the old stamps then in use. The old stamps were not called in, and probably some confusion might have arisen in that way.

AFGHANISTAN — PROCLAMATION OF GENERAL ROBERTS.

Sir CHARLES W. DILKE asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether the Government will at once lay before the House the various Proclamations issued by Sir F. Roberts, and communicated to the Indian Press, but not contained in the Blue Book, Afghanistan, 1880 (No. 1); and, whether it will be possible to include in Correspondence laid before the House, relative to the military executions in Afghanistan, the Despatches from General Roberts and portions of the Cabul Diary bearing upon this subject which have not been printed in the Papers laid before Parliament, and any Correspondence upon the matter between Sir D. Stewart and Sir F. Roberts?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: Sir, the only Proclamations issued by Sir Frederick Roberts which we have received, and have not as yet published, arrived by the last mail. They are only telegraphic summaries, and we should naturally have waited until the full text arrived before publishing the Paper. But if the hon. Member likes to move for them we will give them at once. As we are expecting, by an early mail, complete statements regarding the executions in Cabul, we do not think it would be right to give any incomplete statements in the meantime. As regards any Correspondence between Sir Donald Stewart and Sir Frederick Roberts on the subject, we have received no information officially. I believe that certain statements as to such a Correspondence have been made in private letters which were clearly not meant to be published.

Sir CHARLES W. DILKE: The first Proclamation I allude to was on the 23rd December. I do not know whether that can be published?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: If my memory serves me right, the Proclamation of the 23rd December is one of those to which I have alluded. If the hon. Member will communicate with me I will tell him exactly.

CRIMINAL LAW (CHANNEL ISLANDS) —CASE OF JAMES THOMAS.

Mr. PEASE asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the case of James Thomas, who was brought up from gaol to the Royal Court at St. Helier's on a charge of having assaulted one of the warders, a charge for which he was afterwards punished, when it appeared that the prisoner had been kept in his cell two months without being allowed exercise for fear he should incite other men in confinement to rebel; and, whether he has any control of the Channel Island Prisons; and, if so, whether he proposes to take any notice of this case?

Mr. ASSHETON CROSS, in reply, said, his control over the Channel Islands prisons was very limited, nor did he know anything of the particular case mentioned in the Question; but he had communicated with the Lieutenant Governor of Jersey, and if he had any power of putting matters straight he would do so.

CUSTOMS CIVIL SERVICE WRITERS.

Mr. FINIGAN asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether it is true that the Civil Service writers employed in Her Majesty's Customs, who have served more than seven years, and who have been recommended by their respective principals as eligible for promotion to the lower division of their clerks, are to be deprived of their pay during the time of their examination, in addition to being required to pay an examination fee of one pound?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: Sir, there will be a difficulty in carrying on the Public Service if every matter of minute detail is to be made matter of communication in this House. But I may say that I have made inquiry into this subject, and I find that it has been arranged in the Office of the Accountant General of the Customs that writers should attend for examination and then go to the Custom House and complete their day's work, so that business should not get into arrear. That is in the Accountant General's Department; but in the other Departments this cannot be arranged, and, therefore, as many days' leave will be granted to writers who are entitled to holidays with pay as they have holidays due to them. But if no holidays are due to them, they cannot go except by sacrificing their day's pay.

GRAND JURIES AND PRESENTMENT SESSIONS (IRELAND).

SIR THOMAS M'CLURE asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to bring in a Bill to amend the Law relating to Grand Juries and Presentment Sessions in Ireland?

MR. J. LOWTHER, in reply, said, that the serious demand which the Government was obliged to make on the time of Parliament as to other matters of great urgency rendered it impossible for them to introduce this Session such a measure as was referred to in the Question.

PRISONS (IRELAND)—ABOLITION OF SPIKE ISLAND CONVICT PRISON.

MR. O'CONNOR POWER asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If any steps have yet been taken to carry out the recommendations of the Royal Commission in reference to the abolition of Spike Island Convict Prison; and, if so, when it is likely that complete effect shall be given to that recommendation; and, if it is true that the Government have decided to establish a convict prison in Galway; and, if so, what reasons have induced them to select Galway for the purpose named?

MR. J. LOWTHER, in reply, said, that steps had been taken to carry out the recommendations of the Royal Commission in reference to this subject. The decision of the Government was that Spike Island should be discontinued as a convict establishment. It was necessary, however, to make careful inquiries as to the selection of another place which should be suitable for that purpose, and after much deliberation the Irish Government came to the conclusion that Galway would be such a place. A Commission had been appointed to consider and report upon the best means of carrying out that arrangement.

HOME RULE.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH: I trust I may rely on the indulgence of the House if I venture, in a very few words, to make a personal explanation. My attention has been very recently drawn to some remarks that were made on Monday night last with regard to myself by the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition. In the course of his speech he said that he believed I had, in the county of Down election, communications with the Home Rulers. I am at a loss to know on what grounds the noble Lord made this assertion. No communications were made by myself, for the simple reason that no questions were asked. I can assure the noble Lord that in the many speeches I made during the time I was canvassing in Down, in not one of those speeches was there ever the slightest allusion to the question of Home Rule. The noble Lord further added that he thought it would be satisfactory if my own views were given more freely on the subject of Home Rule. I can assure the House, and I can assure the noble Lord, that much as I appreciate, and much as I value the honour done me by my constituents in the county of Down—the county which I consider one of the finest, if not the very finest, in the whole of Ireland—a county which I am proud to think I am not the first member of my family who has had the honour of representing it—I would willingly sacrifice that seat sooner than be returned to this House as an advocate or as a supporter of Home Rule. I must apologize through you to the House for having taken up their time to-day; but I feel sure that the noble Lord will forgive my having ventured to make this explanation. Had he known my views on the subject I am sure he would not have given me occasion to make it.

THE MARQUESS OF **HARTINGTON**: I am sure the noble Lord owes me no apology for the explanation he has just made, and which I am very glad of giving him the opportunity of making. However, in order to make it quite complete, perhaps the House will allow me to make one or two observations. I think the remarks I made with reference to the noble Lord have not been quite correctly reported to him. I said, or at least I intended to say, that the noble Lord had not in any of his speeches declared himself on the subject of Home Rule. Especially I stated that what I had been informed was this—that it had been publicly stated, and had not been contradicted, that the noble Lord had had interviews with members of the Home Rule Association, and that it had been publicly announced that the assurances given to them were perfectly satisfactory to them. This statement is one which I do not understand the noble Lord to contradict. The noble Lord stated that he was at a loss to discover from what quarter I obtained my information. I beg now to give him the particulars upon which my information was obtained. An address was published by the Ulster Home Government Association, of which I need read only one passage—

> "In discharge of the obligations of this sacred task, we attempted to obtain concessions to our cause from the rival candidates at the late Down election. With Lord Castlereagh, we succeeded; with Mr. Andrews, we failed."

That address is signed by "Isaac Johnston, president; J. C. Quinn, hon. secretary; and J. Denny, acting secretary." Subsequently to this, there appears to have been some discussion, and Mr. Quinn wrote a letter to *The Evening Telegraph*, in which he said—

> "Sir,—In reply to your leading article on the above subject, I beg to state—First, Lord Castlereagh is pledged not to vote against Home Rule."

It will be satisfactory to the House, if the noble Lord desires to clear up his position, if he can give a contradiction to that statement also.

VISCOUNT **CASTLEREAGH**: I have before told you I had no communication with the Home Rulers. I was asked no question on the subject of Home Rule in the county Down.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND) BILL.

(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. James Lowther, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.*)

[BILL 1.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

MR. **SYNAN**, in rising to move, as an Amendment—

> "That it is inexpedient that any portion of the property accruing to the Commissioners of Church Temporalities under 'The Irish Church Act, 1869,' shall be applied towards the temporary relief of distress in Ireland, and that the provisions of the Bill authorizing such advances out of such property cannot be satisfactory; and this House is of opinion that all advances to be made for the purpose of relieving the distress in Ireland should be made from Imperial resources,"

said, he was glad the point had not been decided on Thursday last, because since then information had arrived from Ireland which made it imperative, he thought, that the Government should adopt his Amendment in some shape or other. The present Bill was altogether inadequate for the emergency, and the mail from Dublin had solved the question. The 9th clause, which would exhaust as much money as all the other provisions, related to the application of money for the purpose of improving land in order to enable the landlords to employ the labouring classes in Ireland to save the rates. According to the Circular of the 22nd November, a proposal was made to the Irish proprietors authorizing them to apply for money at the rate of 3½ per cent, for the purpose of improving their estates and giving employment to the poor. That Circular, however, proved to be practically inoperative, for the landlords refused to avail themselves of its aid, and nearly two months later—namely, on the 12th of January—a new one was issued, offering the money at 1 per cent. The Irish proprietors, in order to relieve the rates, had answered that Circular, and applications had been made which would exhaust the whole of the £500,000 provided for by the Bill. If that £500,000 was to be exhausted by the applications of the Irish proprietors, where was any to be got for the Sanitary Board or the presentment sessions? Evidently, then, there was *pro tanto* a misapplication in the Bill of the Church Surplus Fund, and evidently, too, the £500,000 was totally inadequate to the occasion; because if that sum had already been applied for, and if the Government intended to grant it, and not break faith with the Irish proprietors, the rest of the Bill was so much waste paper. He had dealt with the proposals which related to presentment and extraordinary presentment sessions on Thursday. There was no analogy between the present state of things and that which existed in 1846 and 1847; and there was no danger, considering that money was to be given to the sanitary authorities and to Boards of Guardians, that this part of the Bill would lead to the pauperization of the labourers. There was a danger, no doubt, that useless works might be set on foot; but that was no argument against the principle, as that might occur in any case. With reference to Clause 4, relating to loans to Boards of Guardians, there was no clear provision that the sanitary authorities, which were generally the Boards of Guardians, would only have to pay 1 per cent, instead of 3. Then rates would have to be levied, and the payment of these rates would, in many cases, drive the occupiers into bankruptcy. On the 29th of September it appeared that there were 47 Unions in Ireland in which the rates varied from 3*s*. to 4*s*. 5*d*. in the pound. It might be necessary to raise them to 6*s*., 7*s*., or even 8*s*. in the pound, which would mean the bankruptcy of the ratepayers. He had no objection to the application of the Irish Church Surplus to save the ratepayers from bankruptcy; but if the Government meant really to relieve Irish distress, they must do something more than apply this £500,000, and they would have materially to alter the provisions of the Bill, by adopting the principles set forth in his Amendment. At least £1,000,000 was wanted, and the Government certainly would not be able hereafter to say that they were not fully acquainted with the magnitude of the distress. In the last week two deaths from starvation had occurred in the heart of his own county. Up to the time of these deplorable events, he himself had been ignorant of the magnitude of the present crisis, and, consequently, he could not blame the Government for their ignorance of it. But he warned the Government that they could avail themselves of that excuse no longer, for it was now high time that they should see that the sum they proposed for the relief of the distress was an inadequate one, and that the measures they contemplated amounted to mere mockery. Reference had been made last week to the Cotton Famine, and to the Act passed for the purpose of relief in that case. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not in the House at the time of the allusion; but he came in afterwards, and he did not seem to be aware that any such Act was in existence. He (Mr. Synan) then put the Statute into the hands of the hon. and learned Member for Kildare (Mr. Meldon), and the answer given to that hon. and learned Gentleman was that the cases were not analogous. He would admit that the rates of interest were different; but the condition of the two countries were a sufficient reply to that objection. Would anyone compare rich Lancashire with pauper Ireland? In Lancashire there was a well-off middle class, and there was a wealthy upper class. In Ireland there was no middle class, and the upper class consisted of absentees. With such a country as Ireland without a substantial middle class, or a wealthy upper class, why should Her Majesty's Government higgle about 2 per cent? Why throw the proposed grant on the Irish Church Surplus Fund and on the ratepayers of the country, who distinctly told the Government that they would become bankrupt if this were the only measure brought forward to meet the existing distress? What was the action of Her Majesty's Ministers in this matter —what answer did they give to the call made upon them? Let them boldly say—"We will not allow the Treasury to lose 2 per cent; we do not think Ireland should ask us to do it, starving and pauperized as she is." Let it go forth distinctly that that was the reply of the Administration, and he should like to know what kind of a response it would receive across the Channel? He might be told, and it had been said by the Press—"Oh, you are making a great noise about this Irish Church Surplus Fund. The money is there, why should it not be applied?" They did make a noise about it, and for obvious reasons. It was not a proper fund from which to draw the required advances, as there were already various purposes for which the £4,000,000 or £5,000,000 of that Fund, whenever it was realized, might be useful. They wished to reserve it for a great purpose. £1,000,000 of the Fund had been already voted for intermediate education. He (Mr. Synan) supported that, and on this ground—that it was impossible to ask the House, with its present opinions on denominational education, for any grant out of the public Treasury for the purpose of instruction in Ireland, and that was an instance of an equitable application of the Fund. It had also been applied for the purpose of supporting the famishing schoolmasters of Ireland. He supported that application on the same ground; and he affirmed that no Government, whether Imperial or Irish, would be blamed for such an application of the Fund. What was the purpose for which the Irish Members wished to keep the remaining money? They wished to keep it in order to make a great experiment with regard to a settlement of the Land Question. There was not a man in the House — there was not a man in the country—who did not know that that was the vital question at this moment in Ireland, and that, in order to have peace in that country, they must begin and deal with that subject. Nobody could deny that the proper mode of settling the question was by creating a peasant proprietary in Ireland. He hoped the experiment might be made this Session by carrying into effect the recommendations of the Committee over which the hon. Member for Reading (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) presided. If the experiment succeeded, the Irish people would succeed in demanding that it should be carried out more extensively; if it failed, those whom he addressed need not be afraid of the Treasury. They would not lose their money. That was their reason for regarding the Irish Church Surplus Fund in this matter as they did, and he hoped the House would aid them in keeping it intact. He also hoped the House would aid them in changing the provisions of the Bill, and in endeavouring to render it a measure worthy of, and adequate to, the occasion. They could not allow the Government to set their unholy hand upon the Irish Church Surplus Fund. Why did he say unholy hand? The Members of the present Administration opposed, as earnestly as they could, the creation of the Fund—they tried to prevent its being realized; but now that this great Fund had been realized, he called upon the House to help them in keeping it from the grasp of Her Majesty's Ministers. The Imperial Government now stood before the tribunals of public opinion all over the world. The cry of Irish distress had penetrated into every country of the globe. It had passed over Europe. It had crossed the Atlantic, it had gone to Australia, and funds were pouring in from abroad for the purposes of relief, while the Imperial Government of this great country —the wealthiest in the world—refused to give £500,000 out of the public Exchequer for such a purpose. Would the House permit the Members of the Government to continue in their refusal? If it did, a more shameful act would never have been done by any rulers of a great country. What would be said of it in France? What would be said of it in Germany, in Austria, in America, in Australia? He would not believe that such an act of refusal was possible until he actually saw it. But there was another tribunal before which Her Majesty's Ministers stood, and that was the tribunal of Irish opinion. They might defy it—they might despise it; they might treat it with contempt; but if they did so they might be assured that such a course of proceeding would recoil upon themselves. It would re-act upon them, and the exasperated public opinion of Ireland would furnish them with an answer which it would have been worth not £500,000, but £10,000,000, to have prevented being given. He did not suppose that even the Government estimated the affection or the gratitude of the Irish people so low as to think that the Sister Island was not worth a loan out of the Treasury of £500,000; but if they did, he trusted that the House would never support them in such a view. The hon. Gentleman concluded by moving the Amendment of which he had given Notice.

Mr. O'CONNOR POWER, in seconding the Amendment, said, he was sure the House must have been impressed by the able arguments which the hon. Gentleman the Member for Limerick (Mr. Synan) adduced in favour of advancing this money out of the Imperial Exchequer rather than out of the Irish Church Fund. The part of the speech of the hon. Gentleman which he (Mr. O'Connor Power) admired particularly was that portion in which he showed clearly that £500,000 sterling, whether taken out of the Irish Church Surplus Fund or from the Imperial Exchequer, would be totally inadequate to meet the crisis in which Ireland was now involved. It had been estimated that the total loss on agricultural produce in that country, owing to the bad harvest of the last year, amounted to no less a sum than £30,000,000. Of course, when they came to consider measures of relief for distress in the agricultural population it would be fair to remember that these figures represented the total loss, a portion of which had been sustained by large farmers, and by other men who were financially in a condition to bear the strain which was put upon them. What he believed, however, the House should do was to give relief as speedily as possible, and with as little demoralizing influences as possible, to the poor tenant farmers and labouring classes of Ireland; and what they had to do was to calculate what losses had been sustained by those portions of the community. Mr. Neilson Hancock, an eminent authority on the subject, estimated that the total loss on the potato crop alone in Ireland during the past three years had been £11,556,000, and that last year alone it was not less than £6,000,000. This was the loss which it should be the object of the Government to supply, and which pressed severely upon the tenant farmers and the labourers. In connection with the proposals of Her Majesty's Ministers, more than £500,000 had been already applied for by the landlords in anticipation of the passing of the Bill; and it must also be borne in mind that the circumstances under which the money was to be applied would render it necessary to make further advances from time to time. There was nothing which prohibited those who had already made application from anticipating others who might not be immediately prepared with the necessary security; and unless large discretion were given to those who were to advance the money they might find themselves in a few weeks with difficulties similar to those which had been experienced in 1847. If he had one objection to the Bill stronger than another—and his objections were numerous—it was that so much was left to the power of the Viceroy. Recent illustrations showed that the present holder of that Office had odd notions of his duties as the Representative of the Queen in Ireland, and that he had allowed himself to be carried away by political feelings to offer a public insult to the capital of the country in the person of its Chief Magistrate. The present holder of the position, therefore, was not a Viceroy in whose hands so important a matter as the relief of Irish distress should be placed. Public works had been spoken of, and he quite admitted, he might add, that there had been a great deal of demoralization owing to the way in which public works had been prosecuted during the Famine of 1847; but the experience of that time furnished no conclusive arguments against works of the kind properly initiated and conducted. It must be recollected, however, that if they were to have no such works in Ireland the labouring population would experience very little relief from the measures proposed by the Government. Those measures would undoubtedly bring some relief to the tenant farmers, though if a sum of money were not guaranteed that relief would be of a paltry character. But what would become of the labouring classes of the towns, of the men who were walking about idle in Dublin, in Limerick, in Cork? The system of out-door relief would work well with regard to all persons living upon and employed upon the land; but he would make a great distinction between that class and the class employed, or rather lacking employment, in large towns. He would have no objection to the employment of labourers in public works, while he would decline to employ in that way tenant farmers. Those persons should be compelled to seek employment under their own landlords, or on their own holdings. Something had been said in the course of the discussions on the subject as to the position of the Irish Party in the House, and as to their refusal to affiliate themselves to either side. He found that in 1847 a noble

Lord, then in Opposition, introduced an excellent scheme for the opening up of the industrial resources of Ireland. He referred to Lord George Bentinck and his scheme for opening up railways—a scheme involving the appropriation of £16,000,000. Impartial historians told them that Ireland had been deprived of this by the Whig Party, for when Lord John Russell threatened to resign if it were carried, the Irish Members actually voted in a body against it. They were not likely to act, at the present, in a similar manner; but he regretted to find that no official Member of the Opposition came forward to propose, on the present occasion, a statesmanslike measure to meet the distress which prevailed. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster), who was a great friend of Ireland, had, the other evening, made an extraordinary speech, and had adverted to certain promises which, according to him, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made; but, notwithstanding that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had denied having ever made those promises, the right hon. Gentleman of whom he was speaking had, betraying his position, voted with the Government. A charge of Communism had been made against the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich in connection with a statement which he had made in regard to the expropriation of land; but he found that Lord John Russell, in 1847, was in favour of the expropriation of all waste lands where the annual value did not exceed 2*s.* 6*d.* an acre, and that the proposal had met with general assent in that House. Ireland was in the unfortunate position at the time that the mass of the people were not represented in Parliament, but the bulk of the representation was from the landowners; and in 1847 Ireland was made a victim of the Party jealousy of Whigs and Tories. As a result of this state of things the proposal of the Conservative Lord, on the one hand, for the establishment of railways was defeated, and the proposal of the Whig Lord, on the other, for the reclamation of waste lands was also defeated. It seemed to him that the Opposition, as well as the Government, allowed themselves to be too much engrossed by questions of foreign policy, of which the general feeling in the country, both of Liberals and Conservatives, was that we had had too much. He was convinced that the Government had no intention, notwithstanding the wave of Jingoism that had gone over the country, to involve the nation in war before the General Election, and he would make the Opposition a present of the advice that if they wished to improve their position on both sides of St. George's Channel, the state of Ireland and home legislation generally appeared to him a much more fitting subject for their consideration than the foreign policy of the Government; and he would suggest to those hon. and right hon. Gentlemen, if they wished to enlist popular enthusiasm on their side, that they should turn their thoughts in that direction. He regretted very much that his hon. Friend the Member for Youghal (Sir Joseph M'Kenna) had not been able physically to take part in these debates; and he thought the hon. Member would be able to show that Ireland had a distinct claim on the generosity of the English Government and the English people. The result of English legislation in Ireland had been to leave the country considerably behind England and Scotland in the race for national prosperity. When the Union of Ireland with Great Britain took place the taxation of Ireland was £3,500,000. The very next year it was £7,000,000. In 1800 the National Debt of Ireland was £26,000,000, in 1817—after 17 years of English rule—it was £112,704,773. Ireland had to pay for what was then the Imperial policy of Great Britain—namely, the war on the Continent, for putting down principles in the success of which Ireland was more interested than in their extinction. From whatever point of view they looked at it, Ireland could establish a claim on the English House of Commons to make up for the robbery of the past, and for the efforts to destroy her manufactures. That was the spirit in which the question should be approached. Ireland should not be held up as a perpetual mendicant; and instead of £500,000 being devoted to meet a loss of at least £6,000,000, the English Government should come out magnanimously and say they would not be content to make provision for the present distress, but would go into the causes of Irish misery and endeavour to apply a permanent remedy, so that when another time of pressure came the Irish tenant farmers, secure in their farms and in the protection of their own industry, would tide it over of themselves, and would not need to appeal to the magnanimity of Her Majesty's Government, or to the charity of the civilized world.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "it is inexpedient that any portion of the property accruing to the Commissioners of Church Temporalities under 'The Irish Church Act, 1869,' shall be applied towards the temporary relief of distress in Ireland, and that the provisions of the Bill authorizing such advances out of such property cannot be satisfactory; and this House is of opinion that all advances to be made for the purpose of relieving the distress in Ireland should be made from Imperial resources,"—(*Mr. Synan,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. RYLANDS said, he was quite aware that the loss which would be entailed upon the agricultural population of Ireland arising from the bad harvest which they had experienced would be greater than the £500,000 at present proposed by the Government—in fact, it might amount to several millions; but, at the same time, it did not by any means follow that the sum provided by the Government might not be sufficient. Upon that he expressed no opinion; but he did express a very decided opinion that if the Government found, from the evidence which might come before them, that the amount which they contemplated would be sufficient was not really so, they ought not to lose a moment in coming to this House to provide for the further wants. Now, as to the immediate object of the Amendment, he would say at once that he thought the application of the property accruing to the Commissioners of Church Temporalities ought not to be made to Irish distress unless there were some very strong grounds indeed to justify the action, and the *onus probandi* rested entirely with the Government to justify the course they proposed to take. It must be remembered that a very large amount of money which was now proposed to be taken from the Church Temporalities Fund was with a view to assist landlords in Ireland to carry out improvements on their own estates. Now, the House ought to very carefully consider what arguments the Government could put forth for the proposal. At present it appeared to him (Mr. Rylands) that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had given no sufficient reason; and he did not see why the Government should be allowed to depart from the ordinary rule as to advances. This money ought to be advanced under the provisions of the Public Works Loans Act, and the advantage of that would be that the advances would be kept within the view of Parliament, which he was afraid might not be the case if the money came out of the Church Temporalities Fund. In fact, he should like to ask the Government to say whether, if there was a loss under this proposed arrangement, that loss would be brought under the notice of Parliament? Now, another objection to the proposal of the Government to grant these loans to the Irish landlords was this—in what way were the Government to prevent the landlords increasing the rents of their tenants after their lands had been benefited by the advances? It was quite clear, if a certain amount of money was devoted to the improvement of the drainage of land, it would increase the rateable value of the land; and he could not for the life of him see what security they had that, having increased the value of the land, it would not end in increasing the rent. There was nothing in the Bill to prevent such a result, and that was a natural result, because the land would be worth more in the market in consequence of the money allowed to be expended on it by these advances. A proposition was made by the hon. Member for Tralee (the O'Donoghue) last week, which was treated by the House as if it was altogether an impracticable and untenable proposition. The hon. Member said, if they were going to lend money for the improvement of land, why not lend it to the tenant instead of to the landowners; and he pointed out that in Ireland it was desirable the tenants should get a property in their land over and above that held by the landlord. Ulster tenant right had been an unmixed boon to the farmers living in that part of Ireland; and he understood the hon. Gentleman would have been very glad if, under this Bill, there might have been some means devised of advancing money to the tenants to make improvements, which should afterwards be absolutely the tenants' property, and that there should be a right on the part of the tenants which might, to some extent, give them a claim upon the soil. He sympathized with the hon. Gentleman entirely, and would say, if it were practical for the State to advance to the tenant farmers, with such reasonable security, as he was bound to say the State ought to require in advancing money, if there could be any means devised for the tenant farmers to have these advances for the improvement of land, he, for one, should be delighted to see it done. Now, how was it that there was no security which the tenant farmers could offer in certain parts of Ireland? They had security in Ulster; but in other portions of the country, where the land had been improved through the exertions of the tenants, that had been a cloak for raising rents, until now the rateable value of the land was no greater than the rent upon it, and the tenant farmers had absolutely nothing to offer as security beyond it. Now that was a very objectionable state of things, dealing as they were doing with a great state of distress in Ireland, and when they were told that the tenant farmers, after passing through two bad harvests, were now in a state of utter destitution and distress, and when they periodically heard these tales from Ireland about men who had scarcely the means to keep existence together. His hon. Friend the Member for Galway (Mr. Mitchell Henry) had recently been complimented in the Press for the excellent manner in which he discharged his duties as a landlord in the West of Ireland; there were many others like him who did all that lay in their power to promote the welfare and the prosperity of their tenants. But there were a number of absentee landlords, and these he (Mr. Rylands) considered a curse to the country. An absentee proprietary carried their rents out of the country, instead of employing the money in improving their lands and increasing the employment of the industry of the country; and he held that they were partly responsible, in some degree, for the present distress existing among their tenants. Of course, it was a very disagreeable duty for him to speak thus on the subject in that House, which, to a large extent, represented the land of the country; but he might justify himself by referring hon. Gentlemen to a leading article which appeared in last Friday's *Times* with regard to the Land Question. The writer said—

> "In the details of Irish destitution there is generally, not to say always, an omission that would never be found in any corresponding details in this country. Where is the landlord? If a population were found in any part of this island hugging the soil, fighting for patches, living like pigs, and every now and then clamouring for somebody to tide them over their difficulties, we should at once ask for the landlord. No title, no political influence, no personal merits, would protect him from a very unpleasant intrusion into his private affairs. If he pleaded that he could not help it, the public would soon see that his hands were at liberty. . . . . . . Why do wretchedness and squalor give an ill odour to rent in England and not in Ireland? It is often said the landlords cannot help it, and that when they try and do their best they are baffled by the pertinacious adherence of their tenantry to their bad old ways. But it is also well known that in ordinary times a tenantry of this sort is very remunerative—nay, that an Irish landlord will often get double the rents prevailing here, besides having comparatively few outgoings. The actual position of the Irish landowner is still rather a dark spot in these questions; and should there be a real inquiry, it is to be hoped we shall learn a little more about his powers and his difficulties than has been shown in some former Parliamentary Reports."

He (Mr. Rylands) endorsed every word of that article. He was of opinion that the 1,940 landlords who owned three-quarters of the land in Ireland ought to be called upon to do their duty instead of being granted loans with which to improve their property. They were now asking for loans in order to do that which as owners they should have long since done. If they could not have done that which was their duty they should sell their property. Then it was said that the tenants were bad farmers—that they were not provident, nor industrious. He admitted that this was the case where they had no security that their providence and industry would be their own. He had been much struck in connection with this branch of the question by a passage in one of a most interesting series of letters addressed to *The Times* on "Irish Farms and Irish Farming," in which it was related that a man planted himself upon a piece of bog in Ireland some 30 years ago, and, knowing that he would not be disturbed so far as the fruits of his industry were concerned, proceeded in a laborious manner to reclaim it. He commenced by draining the bog, and, having drained it, procured manure and carried it to the reclaimed land in circumstances of great difficulty. Having slowly improved the character of the soil he had reclaimed, the man left it to his sons as a heritage of the industry which he had undertaken. This certainly struck him as being a case of a most remarkable character as illustrating what Irish tenants would and could do in favourable circumstances. Such enterprize on the part of small tenants should be encouraged; but in too many cases where farmers had brought bogs into cultivation, they were rented up to the last shilling of the value, and if they did not pay it they were evicted. This was not his own opinion, but was based upon testimony of a most reliable character. Professor Baldwin, of Glasnevin College, near Dublin, a very high authority, perhaps the very highest authority on agriculture in Ireland, and who was a member of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, had recently stated that—

> "Wide areas of land in Ireland are not yielding a fourth of the produce which could be obtained from them. The dwellings of a vast number of small farmers in Ireland are wretched. In this age of progress it is unsatisfactory to find that there are in Ireland very many small farmers with large families whose dwellings consist of one apartment, in which cattle and pigs are also housed. There are 4,000,000 acres of medium land now growing poor herbage which would pay far better in tillage. At present the gross return of these 4,000,000 acres does not amount to twice the rent; if put under a proper system the yield would amount to five times the rent, and the wealth of the country would be increased to the extent of several millions. The want of drainage is a crying defect in Irish agriculture. In Ireland at least 6,000,000 acres are in need of drainage. This work could be effected at a cost of £5 an acre. The annual letting value would be thereby increased by £3,000,000 a-year."

But Professor Baldwin went further than this. Undoubtedly, £30,000,000 was a large sum to be spent for the purpose of drainage; but he says a great portion of the labour required should be provided by the tenants themselves; that they could perform the labour themselves, and produce the results already stated. Some people might ask—"Where was a capital of £30,000,000 to effect all this?" but the reply of the Professor was to the effect that the greater part of the capital required was labour, that the farmers had a great deal of labour in their families, and that almost all the sons of the farmers could do the work. Everyone who knew anything of Ireland knew it to be a fact that there was a large number of young men whose labour would be available for such a purpose. Then, Professor Baldwin further stated that every experienced agriculturist would agree that the labour would double the present income of the farmers; and what could be more desirable than that every small farmer in Ireland should be offered the opportunity of doubling his income? Why, then, did not they double their income? Professor Baldwin replied that—

> "The small farmers felt that every improvement in their agriculture would be taken hold of by their landlords as a cloak for raising rent."

It was the old story. What was wanted by the tenant was security for his improvements. If that was not provided, every scheme for the improvement of the condition of Ireland would prove delusive. For his part, he could not agree with those who held that a scheme of emigration was the remedy that ought to be applied. The people ought not to be driven from the country in which they were born. They might perhaps be better off in Canada or in the United States; but if they could be supported in Ireland—as high authorities held they could be — then their leaving could not but be a loss to the country. To starve down the land was to starve down the population, and the starving down of the land was the result of the present suicidal system of land tenure. He considered that the present population of Ireland was far below what it would support if her resources were properly developed. He referred the other night to the case of the Channel Islands, where the population was much greater in proportion, and the people were supported in greater comfort because the resources of their soil were fully developed. He had shown on the authority of Professor Baldwin that the produce of Irish land might be increased four-fold, and a much larger population than 5,500,000 prosper upon it. The policy of giving the people an interest in the soil on which they dwelt was a Conservative policy; and he could not but regret that the proposal of Lord John Russell, made in 1847, that £1,000,000 should be devoted to the expropriation of a number of proprietors of bog-land and the cultivation of the bog-land was not adopted. It had been defeated by Irish landowners, who undertook to carry out the scheme, but had failed to do so. He did not know which of the great Parties in the State would deal with this pressing and important question; but he felt that it could be dealt with successfully only by the provision of full security to the tenant farmers of Ireland for the valuable improvements they effected upon their holdings. With regard to the Amendment of his hon. Friend the Member for Limerick (Mr. Synan), he agreed with it because he was opposed to the Government giving relief in the present distress out of the Irish Church Temporalities Funds. He held that this Fund should be held sacred for the great purpose of placing a number of peasant proprietors upon the soil of Ireland. He hoped that the present distress, like the Famine of 1847, would not pass away without this Government doing something substantial towards rendering similar calamities in the future impossible. For these reasons, he would support the Amendment of the hon. Member.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN said, he had not intended to take a part in the present debate, and had, indeed, up to a very recent period, been engaged in taking his part in the relief of the distress existing in Ireland, trying his best to render the condition of the people as little painful as possible; and, in passing, he might say—and he was happy to be able to do so—that he had observed a rift in the dark cloud which had descended upon them. He had, however, come over, at considerable personal inconvenience, to this country, purposely to be present, and with the hope of hearing the Amendment of the hon. Member for Limerick (Mr. Synan), now that distress was acknowledged to exist, discussed calmly and in a manner which would have shown the people of Ireland that the alleviation of their distress was an earnest purpose of the House of Commons; and he was not prepared to hear the attacks which had been made upon Irish landlords. Those attacks might or might not have been just and right. He was not there to defend the proceedings of an entire body, and would not take up the time of the House in the advancing of arguments which might well be deferred to a future occasion. The question before them was a pressing one—the relief of distress, and they ought not to delay its settlement by any discussion as to the policy which had led to its existence. He did trust, therefore, that the House would confine itself to the Bill before it. Whatever might be the causes of the distress, let them not delay business by going into them now, when it was proposed to do something to alleviate that distress. Surely the alleged causes of its existence could be discussed hereafter. If it could then be shown that it was owing to the bad behaviour of any class of men, no matter who they might be, let them be held up, and very properly, to opprobrium. The real question before the House now was, whether an advance for the relief of the starving and suffering people was to be made from the Irish Church Surplus Fund or from the Imperial resources; and as to that, in his opinion, there could be no hesitation. It seemed to him that if the past few years had been excellent years in England and Scotland, the Irish people might very well have come to England and have said—"You have had good years; we have had bad. We call on you to assist us. You are prosperous. We are the unfortunate ones. We call upon you to assist us out of the Imperial fund." But when he realized the depth of the calamity which had fallen on the country, and when he cast his eyes about for the best means to relieve the distress, he was bound to look to the state of England as well as Ireland. He was bound to place himself in the position of the English farmer who had sunk his capital and lost it, of the English landowner whose land was left on his hands, of the English manufacturer whose trade was dull, and the mechanic whose employment was gone, and he said to himself—"I do not think it right for the Irish people, poor as we are, to ask a people nearly as poor as ourselves to help us." He looked at the provisions of the Irish Church Act, and he found that under that Statute there was a fund which was available, and which was intended, by a wise provision, to be used on the occasion of a great national calamity. And could there be a greater national calamity than famine—that which was now afflicting the sister country? It was one of the greatest ever known. It was not only in the scheduled districts, but in many other parts of Ireland, that the want and suffering were great. The deep distress of the small working tenant farmer was not known yet. In many of the papers there had appeared graphic descriptions of distress from correspondents who had gone through the country in a hurry, doing their best as conscientious men; but what they had described was on the surface. What he had seen was below the surface. He spoke of their small farmers, hard-working men, too proud to show yet what they were enduring; and he said a famine which touched that class was a great calamity. What was wanted was something to enable these men to tide over their difficulties. The landlords had been greatly denounced; but what had they been doing with their people? Not only were abatements made in the rent, but a great many landlords had not called up their rents. The people, if called upon, might have been able to pay; but after it they could not go on. Give them time, and he believed that one good year, in God's providence, would enable many of them to get on their legs again. Anyway, let the House go to the point at once. The Government proffered them the money, and let them take it, no matter whence it came. There were many other matters waiting. There was a Bill of the greatest importance—the Seed Bill—waiting; and if time were wasted they must incur fresh disasters, for sowing time would be past. As one who had come over at great personal inconvenience from the post of duty, and who was anxious to get back to superintend some works, and do what he could, as long as God gave him health and strength, in the service of the people, he implored the House to waste no time in passing the Bill.

MR. STANSFELD said, he should not transgress in the direction wisely indicated by the hon. and gallant Member (Colonel King-Harman). He merely wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland a question or two. He had no fault to find with the Government for the prudence and reserve which they had shown in regard to the relaxation of the regulations respecting out-door relief. He thought that the measures which they proposed on that subject were such as to recommend themselves to the House. He did not see, however, why the 31st of December should be fixed upon as the date beyond which the Local Government Board might not authorize loans; and wished to ask, why should the Government favour especially public works presented by the baronial presentment sessions, and why should it look with comparative disfavour on smaller and more local works undertaken by private owners or sanitary authorities? It seemed to him precisely this latter class of work that was likely to be most useful in relieving local distress; and with regard to baronial presentments, he should like to know what were the precautions which the Government contemplated taking to avoid the dangers and mischief experienced in 1847?

MR. J. LOWTHER said, he had no intention of following the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Stansfeld) through the details of the subjects he had brought forward. He was ready to admit that the action of private owners and of local sanitary authorities, when it could be obtained, was to be preferred to that of baronial sessions, which was contemplated only where other facilities were not used. When a presentment was made by a baronial sessions, the plan the Government intended to adopt was to investigate carefully the sources of employment which existed, or which might be called into existence, within the barony through the agency of landowners, local authorities, and private persons; and they would consider whether it was necessary to act on the presentment and increase the facilities already afforded for promoting employment. In a district where it was proved to the satisfaction of the Government that there were already adequate means of employment, they would not embark on the dangerous experiment of public works carried on by these extraordinary means; but, at the same time, they might be necessary in districts where other means of employment were wanting—for it must be borne in mind that there were some districts and baronies in Ireland where there were no means of providing that employment—whether that arose from the inability of landowners or that of the local authorities to provide it. To whatever cause the position of the district was due, employment must be provided; but the circumstances of each case would be carefully looked into when applications were made. The right hon. Gentleman asked why the date, the 31st of December, appeared in Clause 3 of the Bill; but if the right hon. Gentleman would be good enough to examine it, he would find that there was a further period of two calendar months. The object of that was, this being a temporary measure, to enable the Government to take all the measures which might be necessary during the interval which must occur before the next meeting of Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman also asked why, in Clause 9, the period for granting loans to local sanitary authorities was retained; whereas in the case of Board of Works loans the date was fixed at the 29th of February, during which applications might be made. The object of the Government fixing an early date was to induce persons to lose no time in making applications. The object, of course, was that money should be applied for as rapidly as possible, and that as great a portion of it as possible should be expended in the immediate employment of labour. If the Government had fixed the limit at six months, persons would have gone into elaborate plans, which might or might not have turned out to be beneficial; but the object—namely, finding of immediate employment, would not have been obtained. The hon. and gallant Member for Sligo (Colonel King-Harman) had offered very wise counsel to the House—namely, to avoid the introduction into the discussion of topics, however interesting and important, which did not bear upon a measure of temporary relief for urgent distress. But the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands) had favoured the House with his views with his usual ability, and at some length, with regard to land tenure. He (Mr. J. Lowther) did not intend to follow the hon. Member's observations further than to say that there was not a single syllable of that portion of his speech with which he was able to agree. He could not admit that the strictures on landed proprietors were well founded; and he must certainly protest against any hon. Member of that House selecting the present time, when it was of the utmost importance that all sections should cordially co-operate in doing all they could to relieve the distress, to sow dissension between different classes of Her Majesty's subjects in Ireland. It was most ill-advised, at a time when it was all-important that landlords should be induced to borrow money, to incur obligations, to burden their estates, and to make personal sacrifices for the purpose of affording employment, to disparage their efforts, to impugn their motives, and to discourage them in their attempts to do their duty in that state of life to which they had been called. Reference had been made to the Irish Church Surplus Fund; and the hon. Member who moved the Amendment (Mr. Synan) spoke in favour of hypothecating the entire amount of that Fund for the purpose of endeavouring to create a peasant proprietary in Ireland. He (Mr. J. Lowther) did not wish to follow that question farther. He had his own view on the question; but he did not think that was the proper time for devoting himself to an explanation of it. He might say that he did not think that would be a proper remedy. What he ventured to remind the House was that he had failed to find any such provision as had been mentioned in the Irish Church Act. He did not, of course, consider himself individually bound in any shape or form by the Irish Church Act. Parliament was, of course, perfectly free to repeal the whole or any section of it, and, of course, the method of apportionment of the Surplus in that Act was merely an expression of opinion, and was not binding on that or future Parliaments; but the words of the Act were that it was expedient that the Surplus should be devoted mainly to the relief of unavoidable calamity and suffering. The proposal of Her Majesty's Government was far nearer to the purpose contemplated by the Act than the interesting experiments which had been indicated by the hon. Member for Limerick. He (Mr. J. Lowther) wished to say one word with regard to the amount which was proposed to be devoted for this purpose. Fears had been expressed that the amount in the Bill—namely, £500,000, would not be adequate for the purpose in hand. He might explain that when the Bill was drawn the amount of money for which application had been made had not been such as to lead the Government to think that that sum of £500,000 would be inadequate; but applications had recently been coming in more freely, from the owners of land especially, and applications had already come up to the amount named in the

Bill. On that account, and with the view to be prepared to meet future demands for loans, he was glad to say that his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer intended to move in Committee that the sum of £500,000 should be changed to £750,000.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY said, he could not agree that all the other topics alluded to by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands) ought to be excluded from the present debate, as they were questions which would have to be discussed with a view to legislation during the Session. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland had quoted the words of the clause in the Irish Church Act for the purpose of showing that raised funds should not be used for the purpose of making peasant proprietors. But if the right hon. Gentleman had read a little further he would have found that the words of the Act interposed a prohibition for the appropriation of the Fund to such a purpose as that now contemplated. The Act said that any unseen misfortune or unavoidable accident, such as the present distress, should not relieve property from its duties in connection with the relief of the poor. The hon. Member for Limerick (Mr. Synan) protested against borrowing from this Fund for the relief of distress; he did so on general grounds, and he also did so on special grounds; for there were ways in which the Fund could be employed to relieve the distress, without incurring waste, and without contravening the principles of political economy, as the methods of the Government must do. He thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer was bound to show how he would approach the Church Surplus, and whether he was proceeding in the most economical manner. None of these things had been explained by the Government. He also thought the Government ought to explain why they made advances to landlords at 1 per cent for the purpose of permanently improving their own property. It must be borne in mind that if Parliament advanced on these terms they would have no power to prevent the landlords unduly raising their rents; and while they gave the landlords money at 1 per cent, how did the Government deal with the ratepayers? Boards of Guardians would have to pay 3½ per cent interest for their loans; and whilst the landlords were allowed 35 years to repay the advances made to them, the towns, who could only expend the money in out-door relief, were only allowed 10 years. The Bill would also impose on Unions the necessity of giving extended out-door relief. Surely that was a good reason for placing them on the same footing as the landlords. Why should baronial sessions be the only public bodies authorized to make proposals for expending this money? Why should not the sanitary authorities of towns have the same power? Towns ought to be provided with the same machinery as rural districts in the case of baronial sessions. It was quite plain that a much larger sum than even £750,000 would have to be spent. It appeared that £500,000 had already been demanded on loan by the owners of land. This Bill was prepared with a knowledge of that fact; and the Government might rely upon it that a much larger sum would be required.

MR. J. LOWTHER repeated, that when the Bill was drawn the sum of £500,000 appeared to be sufficient, looking to the applications which had then been received; but from the number of applications which had since been received that sum appeared to be inadequate, and, therefore, it was proposed to increase the sum to £750,000.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY did not think that the Bill, as originally drawn, would provide what on a fair calculation would be necessary to meet the item of out-door relief. He therefore hoped this stage of the Bill would not be allowed to pass without a division.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he was quite as anxious as any hon. Member to proceed at once with the Bill. At the same time, there were one or two observations of the hon. and learned Gentleman who had just sat down which he could not allow to pass by. He had asked how they proposed to deal with the Church Fund. He (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) had stated some time ago that it was his intention, in the course of the Session, to introduce a measure for the regulation and disposition of that Fund. At present, strictly speaking, there was no Church Fund at all; but only an annual income derived by the Church Temporalities Commission from certain sources. That income had certain charges laid upon it, and, especially, the Commissioners had to pay the interest on a sum of £5,700,000, which they owed to the National Debt Commissioners. They had not only to pay that interest, but they had out of the surplus of their income to make re-payments of the principal of that debt. But there was no regular provision as to what amount was to be paid from time to time to the National Debt Commissioners; and if Parliament should go on as it had recently done, laying further charges on the future surplus or present income of the Church Commissioners, of course the re-payment to the National Debt Commissioners must be inevitably delayed. He proposed, therefore, to introduce a Bill, the main character of which would be to fix a time within which that debt should be paid off by turning the regular interest and uncertain instalments into terminable annuities, which would cancel both principal and interest in a certain time. Whatever advances might be made under this Bill from the Church Fund for the relief of distress, and which would have to be raised by further borrowing from the National Debt Commissioners, would be discharged by these annuities. As to the amount fixed in the Bill, as his right hon. Friend had explained, the £500,000 had been fully applied for, and of this some £50,000 or £60,000 had been applied for by the sanitary authorities, and other claims were still coming in. The Government, therefore, thought it necessary to increase the amount. The hon. and learned Gentleman had charged them with dealing unfairly by Boards of Guardians because they lent money to the landlords at 1 per cent interest, and gave them 35 years to repay the principal, whereas the Guardians were charged 3½ per cent interest, and had to repay the principal in 10 years. The House would observe the very great difference between the two cases. The great object of the Government in offering advances to landlords was to induce them to come forward at a time which was a very bad one for them, and undertake works upon their property in order to give employment to the poor, and thus prevent them becoming chargeable on the rates. Therefore, in order to tempt the landlords to do this, they had offered them terms which were exceedingly liberal. The Government were asked to compare those terms with the charge made to the Boards of Guardians; but in the one case the Government were inviting persons to undertake works which might not be necessary or incumbent upon them otherwise than as a moral duty, whereas Boards of Guardians were called upon to discharge legal duties. They were called upon to provide out of the rates for the support of the poor and destitute; and it would be a great assistance to them to enable them, instead of providing out of the rates of each particular year, to borrow for a period of 10 years at the favourable rate of 3½ per cent, in order to meet an expenditure which they would be bound to make in one year. After these explanations, he hoped they would now be allowed to go into Committee, and that any further questions that might occur might be raised in Committee.

MR. CHILDERS thought the Bill had not been drawn with the care usual in the case of money Bills; and there was much in it difficult to understand. The portion of the Bill which referred to the expenditure of Boards of Guardians and loans to Boards of Guardians did not anywhere express that the money for these loans was to be lent at a different rate of interest than the current rate of interest—namely, 3½ per cent; but, looking at Clause 17, which referred to the re-payments to the Treasury to see who were to make these loans, it was left in complete obscurity whether the loans were to came from the Church Temporalities Commission or not. [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: No; they are not.] If Clause 17 did not allow the money to be borrowed from the Treasury, Clause 19 provided distinctly that the re-payment of all loans made to Boards of Guardians should be made to the Church Temporalities Commissioners. It struck him that the Church Temporalities Commissioners had made a very good bargain; because, according to these clauses, they would be paid what they had never advanced. Of course, that was not intended; but it showed the carelessness with which the Bill was drawn. Were these loans to come from the Irish Church Temporalities Fund, or was there a mistake in the 19th clause?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, that the intention was that the loans which were made to Boards of Guardians in order to enable them to meet the expenses of out-door relief and other charges which were thrown upon them—not money borrowed for improvements in out-door works and works of that kind—would be advanced by the Treasury out of the Imperial Exchequer. These would not come out of the Church Temporalities Fund. The 17th clause was so worded that it provided that the advance originally made by the Commissioners of Public Works should come out of the Church Temporalities Commission to the extent of £500,000 or £750,000; but if the two clauses—the 17th and 19th—were not quite plain, they could be rectified in Committee. With respect to the loans made to the Guardians as sanitary authorities, they were to come out of the Church Temporalities Fund.

MR. CHILDERS replied, that it then came to this—that the 17th clause did not include all advances on account of distress. Not only would £750,000 be advanced on loans to private persons and to baronies; but other considerable sums would be advanced to Boards of Guardians, the total amount of which the House at present did not know, besides £500,000 advanced for seed. That was not a satisfactory way of making a financial statement. The House was at considerable difficulty in discussing this Bill. Whether the Government knew their own mind in the matter it was not easy to tell; but it was perfectly plain that the draftsman did not know the mind of the Government. He had asked whether the Irish Church Temporalities Commissioners had any funds or not. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said they had not. The Irish Church Commissioners, therefore, while owing a very large sum, to be re-paid by instalments, in order to get money must borrow, or suspend, to a certain extent, re-payment of their debt. What the matter came to was this—they were asking persons to lend money who had no money whatever to lend. They were going on with this extraordinary process of A borrowing from B, and B from C, none of which bodies had got the money. Would it not be very much simpler and more satisfactory if, instead of this confusion and complication of accounts, these advances were to be made, like all other advances, through the ordinary agencies which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had done so much to improve by Acts passed by this Parliament? The deficiency in the interest might be charged on the Church or any other Fund; but that did not require all this complicated process. After the explanation given on both sides of the House, and especially after the speech of the hon. and gallant Member for Sligo (Colonel King-Harman), who, he must say, put the case more tersely and clearly than any Gentleman who had spoken from the Benches opposite, it would be very difficult to resist the proposal that the loss of interest should fall on the Irish Church Fund. He was very sorry for it, and wished it were otherwise; but it was very difficult at this juncture to resist the proposal on the ground of its being forbidden by the Irish Church Act. This proposed use of the Irish Church Fund was as close as anything could be to what was contemplated by the Act. It was a much more consistent application of the Fund than the provision of pensions for schoolmasters, the promotion of intermediate education, or even the establishment of an Irish University. The object to which it was proposed to apply the money being, as he admitted, strictly Irish, the distress being localized to Ireland, and the words of the Church Act being almost literally followed, it was very difficult to refuse to agree to the proposal of the Government. He hoped, however, that on this very account the hon. Members from Ireland would make it their business to watch the application of the Fund, and would take care that it was not squandered as loans had been in former years. The sum in question was very considerable, and would probably amount, from first to last, to £1,500,000, in round numbers. It was not without great hesitation that he supported the Bill.

MR. REDMOND observed that, if Ireland was to be regarded as an integral portion of the Empire, there could be no reason why the Imperial credit should not be pledged for the necessary loans. It would be borne in mind, if that were done, that Ireland, as part of the United Kingdom, would contribute her share of the money. With regard to the application of the money, he believed that it could be expended in no more profitable way than in draining the land. The plan of lending to the landowners would be universally approved of in Ireland, but for the widespread feeling that in some cases the landlords would avail themselves of the improvements by increasing their rents. If it could have been possible that the money could have been paid directly to the tenants for use on their farms there was nothing he should have liked better. The bulk of the tenants in Ireland did not possess what had been well called the "basis of credit" such as was enjoyed by all those who held land under the Ulster tenant right system. Therefore, he found the money must go to the landlords; but, at the same time, there surely might be some means whereby the money could be lent on such terms as to prevent landlords from securing undue increase of rent in consequence of the State-made improvements. Then it would be the landlords who would have to repay the money; and he would be the last to say that the landlords should not receive anything from the improvements in their land. At the same time, he thought the tenants had a clear right to participate in the benefit of any improvement that might be made. They ought to be protected against the injustice and ungenerosity of the landlords. He admitted with satisfaction and pride that there were in Ireland very many landlords who did not require any compulsion whatever to make them give to their tenants justice or generosity; but, unfortunately, the existence of others of a different character engendered throughout the country a want of confidence and a suspicion which made it imperative on the Legislature to provide protection against injustice. It was to be regretted that the distress could not have been entirely met by the profitable employment of the people; and he believed that that might have been done if the Government had been more prompt in their action, especially as the distress had not arisen very suddenly. But, as things were, they had to rely upon the extensive administration of out-door relief. To meet the cost of that relief a very large rate would have to be imposed in many districts, and, in the end, might prove to be a crushing burden on the ratepayers. If a rate in aid or any similar device was contemplated, it ought to be an Imperial rate, so that the errors of the years 1848-9 might be avoided, and Unions, themselves barely solvent, might not be taxed for the support of others. He had heard with great satisfaction the suggestion of the noble Lord the Member for Donegal (the Marquess of Hamilton), that the powers of the Bill should be extended so as to provide for loans to railways, harbours, and fisheries. Such assistance was very much needed, as there was a great deficiency in the resources necessary for such enterprizes. In the county of Wexford, for instance, he could mention a railway that was still unfinished, although it promised to be of the utmost public utility. With regard to that railway, the Treasury consented six months ago to sanction the advance of £53,000; but the conditions exacted were so rigorous and the responsibility sought to be imposed upon the directors personally so onerous, that the greatest difficulty had been experienced in raising the funds; and up to the present time no portion of the £53,000 had been advanced. In these matters he thought Ireland might be more liberally and more generously dealt with. That might be done without loss or risk to the public Treasury, for in no way so well as by increasing the material prosperity of the country could they work for the tranquillization, the contentment, and the future welfare of Ireland.

Major O'BEIRNE objected altogether to the baronial sessions presentments as the tribunal for approving the advances, as the members were not elected by the ratepayers, and, consequently, their selection involved the principle of taxation without representation. He believed that in one sense the Bill would be practically inoperative; whilst, on the other hand, it would tend to demoralize the labouring population by making them less reliant.

Mr. FINIGAN said, he should not have addressed the House to-night but for some remarks which had fallen from the Government which might tend to give rise to misconception. It seemed from what had been said that the landowners had applied for loans amounting to £500,000 out of the £750,000 they now proposed to grant, and that the sanitary authorities had applied for a further sum of £60,000 out of that amount. However, they did not yet know how much would be asked for by the baronial sessions, which was a most irresponsible body. The Government appeared to have totally lost sight of the Unions in

Ireland, who were being crushed beneath the weight of the taxation they had to bear, which was equal in amount almost to that of 1847. In the year 1847 the Unions of Ireland were taxed to the extent of 17*s*. 8*d*. in the pound, and the present rate of taxation was nearly as heavy. No provision was, therefore, made in the Bill to meet the very objects it was intended to meet—namely, the distress in Ireland; and it was, therefore, useless for that purpose. The real object of the Bill, it appeared to him, was to enable the landlords further to oppress the tenants of Ireland. In carrying out this object, the Government was now acting in opposition to the spirit of modern legislation; and he protested against the continuance of the system of landlordism which this Bill was evidently intended to bolster up. The landlords would have placed in their hands such large sums of money that it would only serve as a premium for eviction. The landlord would be independent of his rent, and the land would thus be kept in the hands of a small number of persons. As to the financial scheme of the Government, that he considered had already been abolished by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Pontefract (Mr. Childers); and he should feel it to be his duty not only to oppose the Bill now, but when it reached Committee.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

THE O'DONOGHUE was anxious to have the discussion prolonged, in order to give the people of Ireland an opportunity of expressing themselves on the subject of this Bill. One corporate body after another, as soon as they could do so, were giving their decided opinions against the principle of the Bill. The policy of the Government in dealing with Ireland had been the invariable policy of previous Governments towards Ireland—namely, that of giving her one thing while, in reality, they gave her another. By this Bill the Government appeared to give relief to the Irish people; but, in reality, the Bill was intended to uphold a system which was held in abhorrence by the great majority of the people of Ireland. The other night the Chief Secretary stated that the House, on the second reading of this Bill, unanimously approved of it. The refutation of that utterly groundless assertion was absolutely essential. To let it pass uncontradicted and unchallenged would be for the Irish Members to plead guilty either to sheer incapacity, gross negligence, or wilful dereliction of duty. The high position the right hon. Gentleman occupied as Her Majesty's Chief Irish Minister called for the prompt exposure and contradiction of misrepresentations, in order that the public might be able to estimate the proper amount of reliance which was to be placed on the right hon. Gentleman's statements. The Resolution moved by the senior Member for the county of Limerick (Mr. Synan), and agreed to at a very full meeting of the Irish Members, was this—

> "That it is expedient that any portion of the property accruing to the Commissioners of the Church Temporalities under the Irish Church Act, 1869, shall be applied towards the relief of distress in Ireland. The provisions of the Bill authorizing such advances out of such property cannot be satisfactory, and the House is of opinion that all advances to be made for the purpose of relieving distress in Ireland shall be made from Imperial resources."

What was the proposal of the Government? That the distress should be relieved out of purely local resources, a proposal the most opposed that could be conceived to that of the Irish Members. Almost every line of the speech of his hon. Friend condemned the plan of the Government, and called for alterations—alterations not insignificant in character, but vitally affecting the measure. With the exception of two Members of the Government, almost all those who had spoken had either condemned the Bill absolutely, or had pointed out its innumerable defects. He put on one side as altogether worthless opinions of the noble Marquess the Member for Donegal (the Marquess of Hamilton), because the premises upon which he based his observations were purely imaginary. The Chief Secretary on Friday stated that the Bill had received the unanimous approval of the House. What was the truth? That the Bill must be held to have been met with unanimous disapproval. It had been adversely criticized by all those who had a practical interest in it—that was, by all who were likely to come under the operation of its clauses. What value could be attached to the approval of those who either notoriously had misrepresented their countrymen, or those who had no more practical concern with this measure than the North American Indians, and the impartiality of whose judgment was guaranteed by the fact that the Bill relieved them of the responsibility which ought to devolve upon them as citizens of what they would persist in calling the United Kingdom. The right hon. Gentleman had an unfortunate habit of starting up suddenly and blurting out anything that came into his head. He could not think of anything more flattering to say to the right hon. Gentleman. It would reflect too injuriously upon the quality of his mind and endanger his prospects as a statesman to have it supposed that anything he had yet done or said had been the result of thought. Generally speaking, there was nothing surprising in the right hon. Gentleman's being inaccurate; but, in this instance, he had several hours for the preparation of his inaccuracy. He remembered many Chief Secretaries of various politics—Lord Cardwell, the late Lord Mayo, the noble Marquess the Leader of the Opposition, Lord Carlingford, the right hon. Gentleman the present Secretary of State for the Colonies—and he might say of all of them that by their talents, diligence, and deportment, they conferred increased importance upon one of the highest Offices of the State. The right hon. Gentleman who now occupied that high place was simply provoking, and proved by every act and word that he was the meanest of partizans. This Bill had been contrived by one who was ignorant of, and indifferent to, the condition of Ireland, and one who was a reckless supporter of the extreme pretensions of the landlord class. The first inference was deducible from the fact that the Bill proposed to carry out sanitary works and public works with money borrowed upon the security of the rates and to be repaid out of the rates. No one with any knowledge of the embarrassed condition of all the Irish ratepayers, and particularly in some districts, could dream of making such a proposition as that; and to talk of relieving Irish distress in this way was a perfect mockery. To do so would, in innumerable instances, be putting additional burdens upon persons quite as poor as those whom it was the ostensible object of the Bill to relieve. The next inference as to the views of a concocter of the Bill was justified by its offer to make loans to the landlords at a very cheap rate of interest, thereby enabling them, without any previous agreement with their tenants, to step in upon the tenant's farm, to shove him aside, and supersede him as an improver of the soil, and with the help of the public money utterly to defeat the intentions of the Legislature in passing the Land Act of 1870. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, in his invariably superficial and *ad captandum* style, asked how could anyone object to the soil of a country being improved by its owners? He should not now raise any question as to the sense in which the right hon. Gentleman used the term owner, further than to say that in any society such as theirs the word owned could only be applied to the possession of land within certain well-defined limitations. Let him remind the hon. Gentleman that the soil of Ireland had been parcelled out amongst occupiers, that the landlord could not now of his own mere will, without previous agreement, slip in upon the farm of his tenant to make improvements, and must have the sanction of the Board of Works, the tenant having the power of objecting. The Irish tenants generally had a great repugnance to being saddled with the interest of these loans, not merely from the immediate pecuniary loss they entailed, but from an intuitive perception the tenants had that the loans would lead to the raising of rent, and that the landlord's object in procuring the loan was to enable him to say when he wanted to get rid of the tenant. Owing to the dependent position of the Irish tenant, his power of objecting to the landlord going to the farm and making improvements was merely nominal. The tenant-at-will was always liable to receive notice of eviction, while the tenant with a lease could be harassed by the thousand and one annoyances at the command of the landlord. With the large number of tenants whom ruin had already overtaken, or over whom it was impending at this moment, the tenants' rights could be outraged with the most perfect impunity. It was nothing short of an act of violence, in the absence of an agreement at the time of letting, for a landlord or agent to enter the farm of a tenant to make improvements which the tenant was prepared to make himself, provided he could get the use of that public money which a system of class legislation would reserve for the benefit of the landlords. An attempt was made to palliate this invasion of the tenant's home and rights by pretending that landlords and agents had been seized with an irresistible impulse to find work for the labourers. The pretence was transparent. Who were the labourers? They were the sons and grandsons of the men who were swept off the land by the crowbar brigade, and who had to fly for refuge to our cities and towns and villages. Against them the farmer's door was now closed. To his table they were always welcome, by his fireside they always found a place, and upon his bit of land they would have found a home had not landlord and agent warned the farmer that to harbour the labourer, or to give him land, was an unpardonable offence. He had no fear that landlords or agents would be able to bribe the labourers to form an alliance against their own flesh and blood—the tenantry. If the landlord had land in his own hands, by all means let the Government lend him public money to improve it; but the Irish Members insisted that the same advantage of using public money must be afforded to the occupier of the soil. With this object his hon. Friend the Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) had given Notice of a clause; and he hoped, at all events, that the Bill would not be allowed to pass until that clause had received the sanction of Parliament. They had been called upon to amend the Bill; but it was almost impossible to do so. The whole principle of the Bill was wrong, and nothing but a total change of principle would meet the necessities of the case. He was confident that the baronial sessions and the Boards of Guardians would make very little use of the power which it was proposed to give them of raising money on the security of the rates. They knew very well that they could not do it, and anything that they did would be the merest fiddling. The ignorance which prevailed in England with regard to what took place in Ireland was constantly receiving remarkable illustration. He remembered when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich (Mr. Gladstone) told them that pepper was an indispensable condiment to the Irish peasant. That morning they had English ignorance of Ireland illustrated in that great public instructor, *The Times*, which, commenting on his hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) for proposing that out-door relief should not be given in money, was evidently not aware that for years it had been the custom in Ireland to give out-door relief in money, and, he believed, in money only. He was confident that the only way of reaching distress was by means of a system of State works, and that any other mode would be not only useless, but positively injurious to the country.

MR. BIGGAR expressed his fear that the inadequacy of the Government measures would lead to a renewal of these discussions later in the Session. He had recently received letters from various parts of Cavan describing the great distress which existed there, and from these he judged that the poverty and distress in less favoured districts of the country must be very extreme, requiring much greater efforts to cope with it than any yet attempted by the Government. He thought the propositions of the Government were not calculated to carry out in the best way what ought to be done. He was opposed to the proposal to lend money to the landowners. He believed that the present Lord Leitrim was a very different man from the late Lord, and was the only landlord in his county who would obtain a loan under the Bill. If so, the result would be that in only a very small district would relief be afforded in that way, and not one penny would be spent in any other part of the county. It was not to be supposed that the small farmers and labourers could go more than a few miles to get employment on that property. The same would apply to other counties, and thus the money voted would not be spent for the relief of the poor at all. He was of opinion that it was idle to talk of drawing funds from the Irish Church Surplus, when, in fact, such Surplus did not and might never exist. Even if there was such a Fund, what right had the Government to say that a heavy charge should be made upon it in this particular year? The only reasonable and proper way of dealing with this Fund, if it was to be dealt with in this fashion at all, was to defer the matter to some remote period, at which, perhaps, the tenants in Ireland could not live even on the terms at present existent. At all events, let them wait till the Fund was in existence; and then let the Government and the Parliament of that day dispose of it as they thought best. He advocated the buying of lands by the State, and the selling of such lands in small lots to *bonâ fide* occupiers. It would be no greater interference on the part of the Government with the rights of property, if they enabled the occupier to become the owner, than they were accustomed to in this country in the case of compulsory sale, or where a man was prevented from making a use of his land which was annoying to his neighbours. Indeed, by doing so, they would only be carrying out the provisions of the Land Act of 1870, by which the occupying tenant could recover compensation for improvements from his landlord. Far more was claimed by Irish landlords than from any other class of property-owners in the Kingdom. The landlords were spenders, not producers, and were not entitled to more consideration than others. The proper persons to have loans were those who cultivated the land and contributed to the wealth of the country; and if money were lent out in small sums to that class the employment which was so much needed would be afforded. It was said that there was no sufficient security; but the advance might be made a first charge on the holding, a principle that was not new in legislating. He objected also to the power given to the presentment sessions. They were well acquainted with the objections urged against the Grand Jury system in England. They were of greater force as against the Irish system; and the Government ought to have passed a Grand Jury Bill before giving such authority to the presentment sessions. The present Bill ought to have authorized the Guardians at once, if they thought fit, to give outdoor relief, instead of requiring, as a preliminary, an authorization from the local authority. He thought the Government should take back the Bill, and re-consider and re-construct it. He had received letters from Ireland which described the people as having reached their last bag of potatoes, and he hoped the Government would deal adequately with the question.

Mr. JUSTIN M'CARTHY said, that whatever the Government might do he hoped that they would consent to the principle of the Amendment, and would not apply any part of the Irish Church Fund to this particular occasion. It seemed to him that there was something rather petty—he was almost going to say paltry—in making that kind of use of any portion of a fund which was intended to be the means of conferring an enduring benefit on Ireland, and which was certainly not intended to be the means of staving off a purely temporary distress. If so treated, it might be so frittered away as to vanish without leaving any permanent traces of its existence. The course proposed by the Government was like the conduct of some paternal personage, who, having provided his daughter with a fortune intended for her lasting benefit, should borrow a portion of the money on the first occasion that she was sick to pay her medical expenses. The distress, though very keen, was not likely to be enduring, and was just such a sudden misfortune as the whole strength of the State might fairly be expected to assist. The Government would greatly conciliate popular feeling in Ireland if they would consent to meet the present emergency out of national funds, and even for the sake of simplicity it would be advisable to seek the money elsewhere than in the Church Surplus Fund. There was, as a matter of fact, no Church Surplus available, so that the Church Temporalities Commissioners would have to go and borrow from parties who would borrow from somebody else, and the interest would accumulate. In some very sensible and judicious remarks, the hon. and gallant Member for Sligo (Colonel King-Harman) had deprecated delay in the passing of this Bill. He agreed with him that any unnecessary delay in the passing of so important a measure would be very much to be deplored; but, at the same time, there was something even worse than delay, and that was hasty and bungling legislation. There could be no doubt that the Government had the means to meet any distress that might occur during the passage of the Bill through the House; and, consequently, there was no reason why the measure should not be considered with care and attention. He was old enough to remember with sufficient clearness the Famine of 1846-7, and the legislation which then took place in the House. He very well remembered how, when Lord George Bentinck on side of the

House and Lord John Russell on the other, contended that that was the proper time to take such steps as would prevent the recurrence of similar distress by placing things in Ireland on a better foundation, they were met by the same cry of "No delay; let us get quickly to some temporary legislation, and put off permanent measures until we have time to consider them." And what happened? When the emergency passed all thought of permanent measures was forgotten, and the opportune moment for making some lasting improvement in the state of the country was lost. He believed that the present was a fitting time in which to effect a permanent amelioration in the condition of Ireland, and to do away with this perpetual distress and these perpetual demands for assistance, which were, he felt sure, painful to every patriotic Irishman. Such action would do more good to the country, and more to establish its peace and loyalty, than the bayonets of policemen or the sulky humours of Lords Lieutenant. Although the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland seemed to regard with something like scorn the suggestion which proceeded from the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands) for using the Fund to establish a peasant proprietary, yet he was not, happily, inflexible in his opinions. He was sometimes open to argument, and occasionally it happened that his Chiefs decided upon taking a course which he had just declared no Government could possibly adopt. Therefore, he was not wholly deprived of hope; and he would appeal to the Government not to fritter away that Fund, but to leave it to be the beginning of the foundation of something which might be of enduring benefit to the country.

MR. O'DONNELL also objected to the application of the Church Surplus Fund in the manner proposed by the Bill. He contended that the roundabout, complicated, and absurd system initiated in the Bill for the purpose of providing the money required in the present emergency ought to be sufficient to condemn the measure, even if there were no other objections to it. It seemed to him that the Government were uneasy so long as anything was existing in the shape of a separate Irish Fund which might, in the future, be used to bring about some permanent benefit to Ireland. He charged the Government with making Irish distress an excuse for the confiscation of the funds of the Irish Church. The distress should be regarded distinctly as an Imperial question; and Ireland, he maintained, ought not to be treated as in any way separate from England on an occasion like the present. The Government treated Ireland as a separate country, while proclaiming their attachment to the Union between it and Great Britain. Whenever there was a question of allowing Ireland a share in the benefits of the British Constitution, of placing the Irish on the same level and footing as British citizens, the Government were always greater separatists than the Irish separatists themselves. By the confiscation of the Irish Church Fund in the way now proposed the Irish people were having a fine imposed upon them for that Imperial legislation which fostered a vicious land system, and which, in former years, directly prevented the growth of Irish manufactures. The proposal of the Government was, in his opinion, wholly indefensible; and the Irish Party in that House ought to offer to it the most strenuous resistance in their power.

Question put.

The House *divided:*—Ayes 126; Noes 34: Majority 92.—(Div. List, No. 6.)

Main Question, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair," put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 (Short title) *agreed to.*

Clause 2 (Interpretation) *agreed to.*

Clause 3 (Extension of power to grant out-door relief in food and fuel).

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE thought that it was desirable to extend the time named in this clause, which mainly applied to the granting of out-door relief by the Local Government Board; and he therefore proposed, as an Amendment, to omit the words "31st day of December, 1880," in order to insert "the 1st day of March, 1881."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER did not exactly understand the object of the Amendment. The Government had thought it right to extend the powers of granting out-door relief to the end of the present year. They hoped that the next would be a favourable harvest, and that there would be no occasionat all for further extension; but it might happen that the present bad harvest might be followed by another bad one. In that case, there would, undoubtedly, be some reason for extending the time. It was therefore proposed in the Bill to extend the time between one Session of Parliament and the next by giving extension to the powers of the Guardians for two months. If, in the following year, there should be a necessity for further extension of time, this could be effected when Parliament reassembled. He did not think there was any occasion at present to carry on the power to the 1st of March; and he thought that the object of the hon. Member for Reading (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) was obtained by the wording of the Bill.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. O'DONNELL said, that under this clause the Local Government Board might authorize the Guardians of any Union to administer relief in food and fuel. So far as out-door relief was at present administered, the aged and the sick could receive it in food, fuel, or money. He did not, therefore, see why the same option of giving money for the relief of out-door distress in the present circumstances should not be allowed. The giving of money would. in many respects, be of great benefit. Among other things, it would allow to persons, perhaps, technically speaking, able-bodied, a very useful choice of food, for with that money they might be able to buy something more suitable for them than the food actually distributed at the relief centres. Besides this, they would be able to be provisioned more conveniently, for the provisioning of a considerable number of persons might be a matter of great difficulty. Again, the labour of provisioning them would be greatly lightened by giving them the money to purchase what might be required. The power of giving money would, to a large extent—in many cases to a very large extent—relieve the local relief centres from the necessity of piling up food, which hon. Members knew, by experience of former distress, became destroyed or deteriorated. If Her Majesty's Government placed power in the hands of the Guardians, or left them the option to give money, it would be found in 100 cases that it would be most advantageous both for the Guardians and the poor persons to be relieved. In a great number of cases, the danger of accumulating unwieldy masses of stores liable to deterioration and destruction would be entirely removed. There were, of course, possible abuses of this system; but there were possible abuses of every system of relief, while there could be no doubt that the giving of money would be most agreeable to a great number of persons. The Guardians being on the spot, moreover, and knowing the circumstances under which the money was to be distributed, would be able to give where they thought they could do so safely, and withhold where they thought otherwise; and he saw no reason for tying their hands in this case any more than under the ordinary circumstances of out-door relief. He therefore begged to move, in the absence of the hon. and gallant Member for Cork (Colonel Colthurst), in page 1, line 23, to leave out "either," and insert "or money or any."

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 23, to leave out the word "either," in order to insert the words "or money or any."—(*Mr. O'Donnell.*)

Mr. J. LOWTHER said, that the Government had endeavoured to deal with the present distress by what was merely a temporary measure, and they in no way contemplated a general amendment of the Poor Law. If the House was of opinion that the Poor Law Acts were intended to hold, a provision of the kind contained in this clause was absolutely necessary. Under these circumstances, he could not accept the Amendment of the hon. Member.

Mr. SHAW could not agree with the Amendment of his hon. Colleague. He thought that it would be a most dangerous element to introduce the giving of money as a provision in this Bill. But he thought it would be worth the while of Her Majesty's Government to consider whether they should not give to the Poor Law Guardians the power of employing men, and returning them money for their labour. He had a strong opinion that the Guardians, as a body, were a better medium for carrying out relief of the present distress than any other; he therefore trusted that Her Majesty's Government would consider the advisability, not of changing the Bill as suggested by the Amendment of the hon. and gallant Member for Cork (Colonel Colthurst), but in the direction of giving employment. With regard to the giving of money to tenants, the subject had already been brought before the Government by himself some time ago in a written document. He was himself acquainted with thousands of acres of land which required to be drained in the neighbourhood of Cork, the landlords of which were absentees. Now, if the money could be borrowed to drain this land, the work could be carried out by local engineers, and the money could be afterwards collected under the Poor Law system and paid into the Treasury. If Her Majesty's Government would make provision for this there would not be one shilling lost, and it would really look like doing something for the tenants in Ireland. They were doing an immense deal for the landlords, and he trusted that the landlords would do something in return for it. He trusted that the Government would consider the question which he had raised upon the Amendment before the Committee; and although he could not agree to the principle contained in that Amendment, he was strongly in favour of giving money through the Guardians for employment on public works.

MR. O'DONNELL said, if the Bill were intended to be of a permanent character, there might have been something in the objections which had been raised to the Amendment; but as the relief proposed was only temporary, he suggested that it should be given in the way most agreeable to the people of Ireland. In his opinion, the consequence of prohibiting relief in money, and of confining it to relief in food and fuel, would be that the people would not come for it; while many more might be expected to apply, if the Government consented to the Amendment proposed by his hon. and gallant Friend.

MAJOR NOLAN said, that nothing, geographically speaking, could be better than the Unions in Ireland for the relief of distress, inasmuch, as they were grouped round the towns; and, on the other hand, nothing could be geographically worse than the situation of the baronies, which were planned out, as a general rule, without any reason whatsoever. The Poor Law Unions were much better calculated to succeed in their endeavours to relieve distress than the baronial sessions, which only met every three months; while, on the other hand, the Poor Law Board met every week in town to decide about the local affairs, and were, therefore, a practical body. He was quite aware that the Government might say—"We have got the baronial machinery;" and he quite acknowledged that it would be a difficult thing for them, at the present moment, to change the very constitution of the baronies, and make the Poor Unions superintendents of these relief works. But they should endeavour to do so as far as possible, because they were really working bodies. He hoped that the Government would consider whether they could not effect something in this direction.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY supported the proposal to give powers to the Guardians for the employment of the people. A great deal of money was given under the head of out-door relief, whether it went in money, food, or fuel. Was it not proper that some of this should go in the employment of labour, and would it not be less demoralizing to the people? The power sought could be very well guarded, for the reason that no one would be allowed to spend the money until the Board of Works had examined the proposals for any works suggested and approved by the Local Government Board. With reference to the proposal of the hon. and gallant Member for Cork (Colonel Colthurst), if the Bill remained as at present, he was afraid it would be necessary to give the Boards of Guardians power to administer relief in money; and, indeed, he could see no very great danger in such a proposal, because, in the latter part of the section, the Guardians were bound to make such provision. If the Government gave the people the opportunity of buying what they wanted, he would be sorry to see money given to them for out-door relief, as there would be great danger, in his opinion, that the money so given would find its way in a wrong direction. On the other hand, if they were not to have money distributed in out-door relief, they should have some assurance that proper machinery and a proper distribution of food and fuel would be provided.

Mr. FINIGAN said, he was in favour of work being provided for the agricultural labourers, in order that an honest means might be afforded them of earning money. At the same time, he begged to say that he fully agreed with, and should support, the Amendment of the hon. Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell).

Mr. SWANSTON said, that he regretted that this system of presentments at baronial sessions had been included in the Bill. He could not but think that the evils of such a system must have an extraordinary effect upon the country. There appeared to be no way of checking such advances. On the other hand, he felt sure that the grant of powers to Boards of Guardians to expend money or to institute works would be beneficial. He therefore hoped that Her Majesty's Government would consider both of these means of relief under this Act. He thought that if the money which had been granted to landlords at 1 per cent had been granted, instead, to the tenants, it would have effected more in the way of relief. He wished that works had been commenced during the month of November last. The works which would now be commenced by grant from the sessions now being held would have been carried on for some time back, and would not have interfered with the spring work about to commence by the farmers. The state of the country was such, at the present time, that he thought that money would be better expended in assisting the labourers to carry on the work of the country than by the institution of public works. He would just give them one instance of application for public works. In the barony of Bere, in the county of Cork, the making of 47 roads had been applied for, which, the chairman of the baronial sessions said, if passed, would cost over £7,000.

The CHAIRMAN said, that the hon. Member was travelling somewhat from the subject in hand.

Mr. SWANSTON said, he merely mentioned this as an instance of what was likely to occur. The chairman said he trusted that the applications would be rejected by the magistrates. He begged to protest against such an expenditure, the consequence of which would be an increase of £600 a-year to the rates of that barony. The entire of the works were rejected.

Mr. MELDON quite agreed with the hon. Member for County Cork (Mr. Shaw) in suggesting that Guardians should be empowered to give relief by means of employment, and not by out-door relief alone. He could not see, if that course was found efficacious during the distress in Lancashire, why it should not be equally so in the case of Ireland. In 1863, £1,200,000 had been granted to the local authorities from Imperial resources for the purpose of carrying on works to alleviate the distress then existing in Lancashire. He felt bound to support the Amendment of the hon. Member for Dungarvan, as he considered that, in many cases, out-door relief in the shape of money was by far the most efficacious and economical. He thought that if provisions only were distributed there would be a good deal of jobbery. Either goods of an inferior quality would be sold at best prices, or else a very large price paid for provisions which could be more cheaply purchased by the people receiving relief. In the present distress there was not an absence of food; on the contrary, the necessaries of life were cheap. What was wanted was money with which to purchase food. If the Guardians exercised discrimination in their relief, giving only to those who were actually in want, he felt sure that no evil would arise from money being granted to them for that purpose.

Mr. CHILDERS said, that the question to be decided was whether something which the clause did not include should be inserted. He ventured to impress upon Her Majesty's Government the necessity of doing something beyond the limits of the clause. Boards of Guardians might grant relief not only by way of food and fuel, as was stated in the clause, but also in the shape of wages, not so much for employment on public works as for improvements on farm lands, such as the drainage of fields, erection of farm buildings, and so forth. Much land in Ireland was capable of great improvement; and if Boards of Guardians were allowed in certain cases to make advances for actual improvements to property on the security of the land itself, the intentions of the Act might be well carried out, and, at the same time, the people would be in no way pauperized. He thought, perhaps, that the matter might be more effectually treated in the latter clauses of the Bill;

but he fully concurred in the suggestion of the hon. Member for County Cork (Mr. Shaw).

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, there were two ways of giving relief—direct, and indirect. The direct mode was by distributing to those in need necessaries or money by which to purchase those necessaries; the indirect mode was by giving work, which, if the people did, they would be paid for, and so obtain money. These two modes had been kept separate in this measure, and he thought they should be so separated. In the first instance—that was, in the 3rd clause of the Bill—it was proposed to deal with the manner of giving direct relief; it was proposed that that should be given in food or fuel, and it had been suggested that it be given also in money; and that was the question to be decided. That question should not be mixed up with the suggestion of the hon. Member for County Cork, who said—"I do not propose that the Guardians should give work, except so as to enable people to get money as wages, and so to obtain means for procuring food and fuel." The question was whether the Guardians should be allowed to provide work so as to enable the people to earn wages, and so to get money. It was to be considered whether the work so provided was likely to be as good and beneficial as that provided by persons such as the sanitary authorities and others, acting under a grant from the baronial sessions. A great deal was to be said on the question of baronial sessions; but that was not the time to discuss it. The Amendment was whether money should be added to the other forms of out-door relief proposed in the clause. He thought such a course would be inexpedient and lead to a great deal of abuse. Experience of former times showed that relief in kind and works were superior to any other form. He should ask the Committee to decide whether money should be added to the clause, knowing, as they did, the danger of its being applied in a manner which they might be sorry for afterwards.

MR. BIGGAR said, that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland had stated that he had no wish to change the system of Poor Law in Ireland. But the Guardians had given money previously, and the present Amendment only had for its object that it might be at their option to grant either money, food, or fuel. Now, as to the desirability of giving cash instead of coals and fuel for out-door relief in certain cases, he would point out that some of the Poor Law Unions in Ireland were very extravagant, and that, in other cases, the Unions extended from 12 to 15 miles beyond the workhouse. Did the right hon. Gentleman seriously mean that those poor persons who lived 12 or 15 miles from the workhouse were to be compelled to travel that distance and back again to their homes in order to get an allowance of Indian meal or coal? If the poorest of the peasants were to be compelled to do this many of them would perish in the mountains. What was meant by this Amendment was that the Government should have the option, as they had at present, of giving relief either in cash or food as they might think desirable in any particular case. It did not propose that all the relief should be given in cash, but only where the circumstances made it desirable it should be so. Neither was it at all argued that a preference should be given to cash payments. In the majority of instances he was of opinion the relief should be in food or fuel; but, as he had pointed out, there might be cases of hardship if they adhered to that hard-and-fast line. He hoped, therefore, the Government would agree to the Amendment.

MR. EVELYN ASHLEY agreed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the two points involved in this discussion should be kept separate; but this clause would settle what the law really was to be as to the powers of the Guardians in regard to relief. The suggestion of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) was a very important one, and one which would be of great advantage to the community. There were certain small holders of two to ten acres of land who were often very anxious to get their land drained. They could not borrow money themselves because they were only tenants at will, and, besides, they could not get loans in sums of less than £100, whereas all that they wanted was £25 or £30. The landlord could not lend them the money, because, probably, he had not got it; or if he had, he would not do it, because there was no doubt great distrust existed at the moment between landlords and tenants in Ireland, in consequence of causes to which he would not now refer further. If the Guardians, knowing the circumstances of a tenant, and that he was a person whom they could trust, might advance him money for work on the farm, that would give him a new start. As to the other proposal, to give money instead of food or fuel, he protested against it. When these people got the money they knew to what temptation many of them would be exposed, and where it would be spent. Therefore, to give money instead of food or fuel might, in many cases, have the worst possible effect.

Mr. O'DONNELL said, this clause was one of the utmost importance to the people of Ireland. In refusing to give the proposed option to the Boards of Guardians, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was setting up theoretic ideas against the knowledge and business capacity of those living in the distressed districts of Ireland. To give money, instead of food or fuel, might occasionally lead to a few shillings getting into wrong hands; but most drunkards in a parish were well known to the Boards of Guardians. And the clergy, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, would be interested in the proper distribution of the relief, and they would see that well-known drunkards were not in any way assisted. In fact, plenty of witnesses would be forthcoming to give evidence as to the character of any person applying for relief. The direct distribution of food and fuel would be quite as demoralizing as the giving of money. In ten cases, perhaps in a thousand, errors might be committed; but because of those ten cases they ought not to tie the hands of the Guardians altogether. The suggestion of the hon. Member for Cork was a most important one, and he thought it should be brought up in the form of a special Amendment. A very heavy responsibility would rest upon this House if, in the progress of this distress in Ireland, cases began to be reported in the newspapers of Boards of Guardians passing resolutions to the effect that, in consequence of the unnecessary restrictions which had been placed upon them by this Bill, they were not able to meet the necessities of many cases. If there was a doubt, let the Boards of Guardians have the benefit of it, and let their powers be extended as much as possible rather than restricted. A reasonable demand of this kind ought not to be opposed by the Government on the ground of any artificial distinction, and it was a very artificial distinction which had unconsciously misled the Chancellor of the Exchequer. There was no distinction between the indirect and the direct relief of the starving, the relief being direct in both cases. In the one case they gave without expecting any return, while in the other they expected some return in the form of re-productive work; but, in the first instance, there was no distinction, it was all direct relief of destitution; and the only distinction which they ought to draw was between demoralizing and non-demoralizing relief; and if there was one form of relief less demoralizing than another it was that suggested by the hon. Member for Cork, and the Amendment was one which the Government ought to adopt.

Mr. O'CONNOR POWER regretted very much that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not replied in a more generous spirit to the observations of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Pontefract (Mr. Childers). That right hon. Gentleman had pointed out conclusively that the adoption of the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork would be very advantageous. The Chancellor of the Exchequer must not imagine that the Irish Members were merely theorizing upon this question. Most of them had had some practical experience in the administration of the Poor Law. He could speak for Unions in his own county where the people would have to travel distances of 15 or 16 miles to get to the workhouse. He knew one Union which extended 30 miles in one direction, being very thinly populated throughout; and the question was whether they were to compel poor men and women to trudge 15 miles for a bag of meal, and then to trudge home again? Such an idea was simply ridiculous. Besides, the rough food which was distributed at the workhouse might be entirely unfit for some of the applicants; and if they were given a couple of shillings they would be able to go to the apothecary and obtain something which would keep body and soul together. It was to be borne in mind that they were not proposing to substitute money relief for relief in food and fuel, but only that there should be power to do so in certain cases. The

Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the baronial sessions would have the power to deal with the question of money advances; but the matter had better be settled at once by this House. He should prefer to rely upon the practical intelligence of the Boards of Guardians, representing, as they did, both the landlords and the tenants, rather than to the baronial sessions. Complaints were already being received as to the summoning of the baronial sessions, and the chances were greatly in favour of the measures of relief proposed by them entirely breaking down. That was an additional reason why the Government should re-consider the matter.

MR. SHAW hoped the Government would, at all events, say they would favourably consider the suggestions which he had made. He had not made it from any spirit of speculation, but from his own practical knowledge of Poor Law Guardians for many years. If the Government would say they would favourably consider the matter he thought they might be able to make progress with the Bill; but if they would not, he should move the postponement of this clause, because he considered it a most important one, and the present point of the Bill was the proper place at which to settle the question. As to the machinery for distributing food and fuel relief under the Bill, he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer had carefully considered what ought to be done in consultation with the officials in Ireland, and that it was not intended to bring the poor people from their homes to the central workhouse. If he proposed that, it would, in many cases, simply lead to death from exhaustion. He knew districts where the men and women would have to travel 20 miles. What they ought to do was to insert in this clause words providing for the establishment of depôts in various districts, and it ought not to be left to the mere will of the Boards of Guardians to say—" Here is food—you must come and fetch it;" when the workhouse might be 10 or 20 miles away.

THE MARQUESS OF HAMILTON said, the questions they had to deal with were of the utmost importance, and it was a matter of considerable gravity to decide whether Unions should give relief in the shape of money or in kind. With regard to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw), he thought there was much argument in its favour; and he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would feel himself at liberty to take up the proposition and include it in his Bill.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON said, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had asked the Committee, with a great deal of reason, to bear in mind the distinctions contained in the Bill between two possible methods of relief—first, a method of relief by the distribution of food gratuitously; and, secondly, a method of relief by means of providing employment. The discussion, however, which had just taken place, must have shown the Government that there was a close and intimate connection between the two; and it was hardly possible to discuss one without considering the other also. As far as he was able to gather, there was a considerable difference of opinion in the Committee as to the desirability of enabling the Committee to give gratuitous relief in the shape of money. Many Members from Ireland, however anxious they might be to extend the power to be given to the Boards of Guardians under this Bill, were doubtful as to the expediency of allowing Boards of Guardians to distribute relief in the shape of money. A suggestion had been made by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) that the Guardians should have power, in addition to the other powers conferred upon them, of affording relief indirectly by means of employing labour in a way not provided by the Bill. The Chancellor of the Exchequer asked them to consider this separately. It was quite right, in his (the Marquess of Hartington's) opinion, that it should be considered separately; but he regarded the appeal made to the Government as a reasonable one, and he thought the Committee ought to hear from them, at all events, that they had not formed a decided opinion against this principle before they were asked to vote upon the proposition now before them. If the Government had made up their minds that they would not extend, in any degree, the second means provided by the Bill of affording relief, and would not take into consideration, under any circumstances, the suggestion made by the hon. Member for Cork, he did not think they should reasonably call on the Committee to decide the question now. He asked the Government, at the present moment, to assent to the suggestion of the hon. Member for Cork. That suggestion had only been made for the first time that evening, and it was quite right that time should be afforded for considering it; but if the Government had made up their minds not to accept it, then it seemed to him that the principle before the Committee would assume a very different aspect than if they announced their intention of favourably considering the proposal made to them.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER failed to see the logical course of the argument of the noble Marquess. He admitted that the question whether the Guardians would be a better or as good a machinery for the employment of the poor as the baronial sessions was a question of importance, and one which they could fairly discuss. The noble Lord said it had been stated to-night, within the last few minutes, for the first time. It might be the first time it had been stated in the House; but it was not the first time the question had been before the Government, because they had considered it very fully in the course of the autumn, and they thought it would be better that the mode of giving relief should not be through the Board of Guardians, but through the baronial presentment sessions. Whether that were so or not, he still maintained that the point now to consider was how the relief was to be given, not as wages for work, but as direct relief; whether it should be given in food and fuel or in money. The only argument he had hitherto heard in favour of giving it in money rather than in food or fuel was that which had been suggested—that if they distributed it in kind the poor people who required relief might have so far to go that it would be almost impossible for them to avail themselves of that relief. If that was really to be admitted, then it would be a strong reason for considering whether, in certain cases, the relief should not be given in money. But the question was whether it really was so. The assumption appeared to be that at present the relieving officer was only to be found at some central point of the Union, to which everybody who required relief would have to go in order to obtain the relief. He fully admitted that, if that really was the state of the law, it would be necessary that some further provision should be made; but, at the same time, he did not admit that it was the state of the law. He did not speak of his own knowledge, for he did not know the practice in Ireland; but this he found to be laid down as the duty of relieving officers:—The first duty was "to attend the meetings of the Board of Guardians," and so forth; and secondly—

> "To attend at some places in his district at such times in the day and on such days in the week as the Board of Guardians shall from time to time direct, for the purpose of dispensing relief and for receiving applications for relief."

Therefore, he understood that the relieving officer went to such districts and such places as were found to be convenient for the distribution of relief to the people, and the objection taken in regard to the great distances the people would have to go was an objection that was rendered nugatory by the practice which prevailed. Further, his right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland would send instructions to obtain information as to the mode in which the Act was to be carried into effect, and he thought, after all the urgency with which the Board of Guardians had been impressed to take care that the people were adequately supplied, there was no danger that this difficulty would arise. The people would want the relief within their reach; and he thought it was far better that, as regarded direct relief, it should be given in kind and not in money.

MR. SULLIVAN was sorry to be compelled to differ from his hon. Friends near him upon this question. It seemed to him to be objectionable on many accounts to give public relief under the Poor Law system in money. He should infinitely prefer to see it given in a suitable manner, and at convenient places, in food of the common kind. In listening to his hon. Friends he found he was a great deal older than he thought he was, for it seemed to him that he was the only one old enough among his hon. Friends to recollect the process actually carried out. He had seen the process, read from a book by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in actual operation, and it appeared to be one that was most convenient to the people. What actually happened was this. Instead of the food being distributed at one central depôt in the Union, there were some 20 or 30 people engaged in distributing food relief all over the Union; and, in point of fact, the food was brought nearer to the homes of the people than it would be at any of the market towns. This was a matter of fact which he knew of himself, as he had participated in the administration of the Poor Law, and had seen what he was now describing. There was a contractor, who contracted with the Board of Guardians for the supply of food on orders from the relieving officer, and he contracted to supply it to the holders of relief tickets at as many places as the Guardians might indicate —from east to west, and from north to south—in the Union. He had seen the carts of these contractors, loaded with food, going four or five miles nearer to the homes of the people than any market town. His hon. Friends said it would be too great a burden for the people to carry food from a central place to their homes; but they must go to the market town. [MR. O'CONNOR POWER: They grow the food on their own farms.] If they grew it on their own farms they had only to eat it. He should be sorry to think that if they had the food, and enough of it, on their own farms, there was any necessity for this Bill. His hon. Friend the Member for Mayo (Mr. O'Connor Power) was only endeavouring to correct him in a friendly spirit; and all he wished to say to his hon. Friend was, that he was old enough to remember what he had been describing when his hon. Friend was a child. He had participated in it, and seen it himself, in the distribution of relief, having been engaged in assisting in the administration of the Poor Law at the time. If the money were given at a central place the people would still have to carry the food home. Supposing they received the money at a central point of the Union, they would still have to go to the shops and buy the food, and then they would have to carry the food to their own homes; so that it came to the same thing. All other things being equal, they would have to carry home the food purchased at the shops on the presentation of the Union ticket, and the same thing would happen if they had the money in their pockets. As he had already said, he had seen all this in actual operation; and although he was sorry to differ from his hon. Friends, he entirely differed with them in the conclusion they arrived at upon the point. He would infinitely prefer to see the public relief given at convenient places in food rather than in money. As to the other point—the question of employment by the Boards of Guardians —he presumed that he should have another opportunity of speaking upon that subject.

MR. O'CONNOR POWER thought his hon. and learned Friend, who was usually so logical, was very illogical in the present instance. When he (Mr. O'Connor Power) referred to the small farmers growing the food on their own farms, his hon. and learned Friend turned round and performed a trick of debate, saying—"Well, then, let them eat it." It was their misfortune that they had not been able to grow it this year, and the retort of his hon. and learned Friend would certainly not win him distinction at the Bar. He hoped his hon. and learned Friend, when he pleaded before a Court of Justice, would improve his logic. His hon. and learned Friend argued that if the money were given to the people in the centre of the Union they must also buy their food there—as if there were no shops anywhere but next door to the workhouse. In the Poor Law Union of Belmullet, there were small farmers who, under the circumstances which had been referred to, would have to travel 20 miles in order to obtain food, while they had plenty of shops near their own houses, with shops also at the cross roads. What, then, became of the contention of his hon. and learned Friend, who had just presented himself in his most venerable form? He trusted the Committee would not allow itself to be influenced by such arguments as his hon. and learned Friend had adduced.

MR. MACARTNEY said, the hon. Member for Mayo (Mr. O'Connor Power) seemed to forget that they were legislating for this year. The hon. Gentleman said the farmers had food in ordinary years; but this year they had none. Therefore, if anybody wanted to purchase from them, they had nothing to supply. The hon. and learned Member for Louth had described what had happened formerly. The Guardians had established food depôts in many of the districts, which supplied the food, and sent round carts which carried it to the people; and, no doubt, the food so supplied would be of far better quality, and larger in quantity, than it would be if purchased at the small shops. Then, again, there was another objection to supplying poor people with money—namely, that they might have to purchase in shops where they were already in debt to the shopkeepers, who might appropriate the sums tendered to them in payment of old debts, instead of supplying food for it.

Question put, "That the word 'either' stand part of the Clause."

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 193; Noes 20: Majority 173.—(Div. List, No. 7.)

MR. O'DONNELL said, he had to move an Amendment, after the word "them," in page 1, line 23, to insert the words "or cases of labour;" or he would accept the suggestion of the hon. Member for Mayo (Mr. O'Connor Power), and, instead of those words, he would propose to insert these words, "or the money for farming operations." He hoped that, under these circumstances, the Government would be able to meet the wishes which had been expressed, not only by the Irish Party, but also by several English Members—namely, that they should allow the Guardians the liberty of engaging labour for actual farming operations and such like. Practically, his Amendment was the same as that suggested by the hon. Member for County Cork (Mr. Shaw); and he hoped that the Guardians, at any rate, would be allowed their own option. The Committee had decided that the Guardians were not to have the option of giving money in general, and they had heard a great deal about the superior advantages of the direct distribution of fuel and food. Now, there was not a single Member who supported the liberty of option of the Guardians in the matter of the direct distribution of money who said a single word against the very great advantage of the direct distribution of food and fuel, and all the argumentation that was expended in praising up the system of the direct distribution of food and fuel was quite thrown away as regarded the object they had in view. No matter how good the distribution of food and fuel might be, it would be better if the Guardians had also the option of giving money relief in the cases that seemed suitable to them. But that, as a general rule, had been refused by the House; and, consequently, in the limited form suggested by the hon. Member for County Cork, he had begged to propose his Amendment. He hoped that nothing out of the practice of the years 1847 or 1848 would be brought against a proposition so eminently reasonable, and eminently useful, and eminently profitable, in the best sense, as this Amendment. Wherever they could, he thought they ought to give liberty to the local authorities who were on the spot, and, in 999 cases out of 1,000, would know better how to deal with isolated cases than even the aggregate wisdom of the two Front Benches of the political economists, and of the Gentlemen who had a particular objection to any of the money being expended on liquid refreshments. He believed he had mentioned the heads of the recent opposition which defeated them so overwhelmingly on the Land Question. He would ask the Committee, before deciding to limit still further the liberty of the Boards of Guardians, just to call to mind a result of that limitation—for they, too, could quote the Famine of 1847. Let the Committee remember the result of the limitation of the authority of the Boards of Guardians and of the local rural authorities in the time of that terrible famine. In their great wisdom, and instructed by a number of leading political economists of the day, the House of Commons declared that no out-door relief should be given to any who held more than a quarter of an acre of land. That was a limitation of the liberty of the local authorities. That was an imposition of the superior will of the Imperial Parliament upon those inferior persons, the members of the Boards of Guardians. And what was the result? That interference of the Imperial Parliament with the powers of giving out-door relief by the local authorities was the measure that slew the people of Ireland by tens of thousands. It was that limitation of the power of giving out-door relief which compelled the cultivators to throw up their farms, and to give up the last chance of keeping up the struggle for life. It was that which compelled them to flock in myriads to the Poor Law Union centres of relief, and which, in a word, completed the ruin of the people of Ireland at that time. He would once more earnestly entreat the Committee, where anything like a reasonable doubt existed, to give the benefit of that doubt to the side of local authority, and local liberty of option, and local liberty of choosing the means of meeting the distress. He was sure his words would be supported by an immense amount of the most powerful testimony in that House. He was sure that all the Irish Members most entitled to speak on the subject would vote with him; and the hon. Member for County Cork, in seeing the absolute necessity of giving Boards of Guardians power of employing labour for farming operations, and in giving relief in the best manner, with the best general results, and with the fewest chances of demoralizing the individuals receiving that relief.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 23, after the word "them" to insert the words, "or money for farming operations."—(*Mr. O'Donnell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he was not very clear what the hon. Gentleman's proposal was. As he understood, the hon. Gentleman proposed that Guardians should be allowed to give wages or money to persons who were in destitute circumstances for farming operations. He wanted to know what the hon. Gentleman meant by "farming operations." Where were these farming operations to be carried on? Were they to be carried on upon land belonging to the Guardians? He was not aware that the Guardians had any land which could be used for the purpose. Were they to be carried on by people upon their own farms? He understood the hon. Gentleman to say that; but he was not quite sure.

MR. O'DONNELL said, he was very willing to make the Amendment wider, and to extend it to the wages of labour generally; but he was endeavouring to produce a case which the Government could not strictly resist. With regard to farming operations, he did not know that he ought to be able to give a better definition than a country gentleman, who so admirably fulfilled all the duties of his position in Devonshire; but he understood that farming operations would extend to any of the possible uses of the spade, the pick-axe, the plough, and various agricultural implements employed by human muscles in or upon the surface of the earth.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, that was not the point. Supposing that to be the meaning of the hon. Gentleman, what he wanted to know was where these farming operations were to be carried on. As far as his experience went, farming operations had to be carried on upon land of some sort, and he wanted to know what land the hon. Gentleman had in view; was it to be the land of the occupier himself—the person to be relieved—or was it to be upon some waste land? He did not understand that point—it had not been made clear by the hon. Gentleman, for continued references were made to the experience of the great Famine of 1847; and though he was thankful to think that the distress now pressing upon a part of Ireland was by no means to be compared in magnitude to the terrible distress in that year, yet, undoubtedly, what they did then must be to them a warning and a lesson with regard to what was now taking place. He would just quote from the authority which had been referred to so many times in that debate. Sir Charles Trevelyan, in his well-known history of that Famine, said it was loudly demanded that instead of men being employed on the roads the people should be paid for working on their own farms. Now he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) did not know whether that was the demand on the present occasion. The historian went on to say that the demand was then steadily resisted by the Government. If it had been adopted, it would have meant that the entire cost of carrying on the agriculture of the country would have been transferred to the Government, without its being able either to test the applications for assistance or to extract the proper amount of exertion, so that, ultimately, the Government would be made to support the people, instead of the people the Government. That indicated the sort of difficulty into which, if that matter went on, they might find themselves plunged; and he did maintain that it was not sufficient for the hon. Gentleman to get up and make a vague proposal such as those words amounted to. The hon. Gentleman must tell them distinctly what his plan was, and in what way he understood the Guardians of the poor were to provide this labour, and how it was to be employed.

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY said, he apprehended all those extracts from Sir Charles Trevelyan's work were really quite beside the question except as matters of abstract speculation. The whole clause was governed by the words which gave power to the Local Government Board to do certain things within two calendar months. It was during those two calendar months that the people would be starving, and that it was, at the same time, necessary that they should labour on the ground, to prepare it for the crops of next season. To him, all those extracts from political economists seemed enough to make one sick, with the knowledge that he had that thousands of people in the West of Ireland were now kept from death by the distribution of yellow Indian meal, which, with a little water, and some seaweed, if they could get it, mixed with periwinkles, formed the food of thousands of Her Majesty's subjects. What was wanted was that something better than Indian meal should be given to the people; and he took the only object of the Amendment to be that the Guardians should at their discretion, and subject to the superior authority of the Local Government Board, have the opportunity of adding a distribution of money which should provide for sick and aged persons, and afford them something better than the miserable food to which he had referred. What the House should do was not to put forward in a petty spirit the abstract rules of political economy—which, after all, were merely the outpourings of half-knowledge—but endeavour to enable those people to carry on their farming operations by giving them a little relief in money. That money would not be expended in luxuries. The only luxuries which the Irish people had learnt from this luxurious age was the use of a little tea and a little white bread, as they called it—a little flour. That was the one luxury which the Irish peasant in the West had learnt to enjoy. And what did this House do? For every 1*s.* spent on tea by the Irish peasant, the House took 8*d.* in taxes. To talk of wishing to prevent their resorting to stimulants, and then to keep such an amount of taxation upon tea, appeared to him to be the greatest hypocrisy. He earnestly and strongly supported the Amendment. The whole of the clause was governed by the powers of the Local Government Board to permit the giving in particular Unions of out-door relief in money or in kind, or in both, for a period of two months. And now the House was told of what took place in the Famine of 1845 or 1847. What did take place? What took place was this—people were starving, and were unable to drag themselves across the mountains to the public works which, after months of inaction, the Government instituted. That was the cause of the failure of the public works—that the people were allowed to fall into such a state of destitution and weakness, that when public works were instituted in central localities, according to the doctrines of political economists, the people were unable to drag themselves across the mountains to those central works, and they died in numbers by the way-side. He could take any hon. Member who might visit the place where he lived to a lake situated in the midst of mountains where a brother and sister, traversing the mountains to get to the relief works, without which they could get no assistance for themselves or their aged parents, found that one of them—the sister—was unable to go any further, and her brother had to leave her to drown herself in the lake. He could take hon. Members to places where people were buried in scores out of one coffin with a moveable slide to tumble the corpses out, and whose deaths were owing to the doctrines of political economists. He protested against such extracts being read now. What they wanted was to save the lives of the people, and to that sentiment his hon. Friend appealed by his Amendment.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY wished to point out that the Amendment did not carry out the suggestion of the hon. Member for County Cork. What he wanted was not farming operations, either in the ordinary or technical sense of the word, but the improvement of farms by small drainages and other works of a more permanent character. There was another element of very great importance. Nothing was said in this Amendment as to the re-payment of those advances; but the hon. Member for County Cork suggested that they should be repaid by the farmers to the

Guardians. He thought, on the whole, that the hon. Member for County Cork's Amendment was a much more useful one than this, and, in his opinion, it should be pressed, and not this.

SIR PATRICK O'BRIEN, said, he was as anxious to have reproductive works as any hon. Member; but he quite differed from those who said they were to ignore what had occurred in previous years. He lived in Ireland in those days, and he had a sorrowful recollection of the proceedings that took place in reference to reproductive works at that period. He was one who, the other evening, endeavoured to impress upon the Government the necessity of reproductive works; but he also pressed upon them that there should be care taken that the extraordinary occurrences that happened in 1846 and 1847 should not again occur. The hon. Gentleman who brought forward this Amendment had an Amendment immediately preceding it. Upon that he voted with the hon. Member; but he was not prepared to vote with him upon this, inasmuch as he did not state in what way he proposed to carry out the arrangement. This was not a landlord's question, it was a question of the occupier. The occupiers would have to pay the rate that was to be enforced by the Act; and it was all very fine to make speeches to the country and to the public out-of-doors; but when hon. Gentlemen got up there they had a right to specify what they asked at that time of excitement and distress. No one would say they ought not to give any amount of money and work, if it were necessary, by that means, to save the people from starvation; but he should cease to be a Member of that House if it was necessary to enunciate opinions of this character—to make general statements in the House and say—"Oh! spend your money; throw it away broadcast upon the country;" and not to ask, economically, how money was to be expended, and how the people were to be employed. He would say one word as to the question of employment upon farming operations. The hon. and learned Member for Limerick (Mr. O'Shaughnessy) had lived in the country and knew something of the farming operations of the district. He was not going to say that the hon. Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell) was totally unaware of what agricultural operations were; but he had a strong opinion in that direction, and he was there to express it. [*Laughter.*] He regretted that his observations in that regard had been met with laughter, for nothing was more from his mind than to excite risibility upon a question of the deepest interest to the Irish peasantry. Let them not be led, by making statements, and by asking for things that could not be obtained, to prevent substantial good being done to the starving people in the Western portions of Ireland. Supposing, as the hon. and learned Member for Limerick had stated, that the money was to be expended on drainage and matters of permanent improvement, the very nature of the work would command attention. The work would require supervision on the part of the Board of Works, or otherwise, to see that the money was not frittered away, as it was in 1847, and robbed from the people. No doubt he would be told it was very fine for him to get up to speak on this subject, and that he was a landlord, and that it was his interest. His reply was, that he was sprung from the tenant class, and was originally connected with that class in the House, and had as much their interest at heart as those who made broader professions. They had a right to see that the people received relief, and that the people to be taxed for it would not be unfairly taxed. They had a right to ask hon. Members who brought forward a Motion of this character in words—mere words—for some statement of the manner in which it was to be administered. When the hon. Member presented a Motion in that fashion he would support it.

MR. O'DONNELL said, the hon. Baronet the Member for King's County (Sir Patrick O'Brien) had succeeded in discovering an almost infallible method of gaining cheers in that House. He had only to insinuate that the hon. Member for Dungarvan, or the small body of Irish Members whom he represented, were ignorant of the facts relating to the subject under discussion. Notwithstanding the correction of the hon. Baronet, his memory bore him out in saying that the hon. Baronet had not confined his opposition to the hon. Member for Dungarvan, but that, on many occasions, it had been directed against his Colleagues also. He had only to accuse the hon. Member for Dungarvan of ignorance or insincerity, and of speaking for some unworthy purpose, and he was certain to gain the warm applause of that body of Members of the House whose political animosity he (Mr. O'Donnell) was by no means sorry that he had most thoroughly deserved. He did not envy the hon. Baronet his oratorical success, but trusted it would go far towards smoothing his path at the next Election. The hon. and learned Member for Limerick had stated that this Amendment did not touch the question of advances made to farmers on certain securities for re-payment; and he (Mr. O'Donnell) ventured to think that an Amendment of that kind would come in better at a later stage of the Bill. They would have to consider the advances to be made to tenants and occupiers. His suggestion was an alternative to the clause that contemplated direct gifts of food and fuel. It was not a question of advancing money on the security of profitable investments, to be returned to the Treasury. He maintained that there were hundreds of starving men in Ireland to whom the Government were willing to give food and fuel, and that they would certainly be doing no injury either to the Treasury or to the people, if money were given directly to these men for their labour—and the labour, he suggested, was to be expended on farming operations. The hon. and learned Member for Limerick had suggested that drainage and so forth were not farming operations; but he (Mr. O'Donnell) ventured to think otherwise; and, furthermore, that the Boards of Guardians would be justified in giving a large interpretation to the clause. If the Boards of Guardians thought they might usefully employ 100 or 200 working men, either upon their own farms or upon the farms of other people, it would be, under any circumstances, necessary to support them, so that the labour of these people would be so much clear gain. Therefore, he maintained that the Boards of Guardians ought to be allowed to give money directly as labourers' wages, instead of giving relief in food and fuel. His proposition was an alternative to out-door relief, and it had no relation to the subsequent clauses on the subject of borrowing for profitable investments. That was one thing; the giving of out-door relief was another. The Government refused out-door relief in money as a general rule, and he (Mr. O'Donnell) only asked them to allow out-door relief to be given in money in a special class of cases, where it would set on foot farming and other agricultural operations. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer was willing to take the words "wages of labour" generally, he should have no objection to their being substituted. But if the Chancellor of the Exchequer was willing to give money as wages of labour generally, then, *à fortiori*, he should be willing to give money for farming operations, because wages for money surely included wages for farming operations. He thought that his Amendment was much more strict and intact than the Amendment of the hon. Member for the County of Cork. That proposal was properly divisible into two heads, as it contemplated both out-door relief being given, and also power being vested in the occupying tenants to employ labour, after giving proper security for the ends for which the labour was to be employed. He considered that the latter portion of the proposal of the hon. Member for Cork belonged to a stage of the Bill which had not yet been reached, and that, as the Committee were then considering the clause relating to out-door relief, they ought to confine themselves solely to that question; but, as he had said before, if the Government were ready to allow the Guardians to pay directly in money for labour in general, he would be ready to withdraw any opposition to that Amendment. On the other hand, the very least he should require would be that wages of labour, when that labour was expended on farming operations, should be paid as an alternative to food or fuel, as a means of out-door relief. Nothing but that was suggested; and hon. Members who were in favour of a larger measure should certainly be in favour of the lesser one. Several Members on the Opposition Bench were, he believed, in favour of wages of labour; and he could not see why they should not be in favour of out-door relief being given for labour expended in farming operations. He, therefore, hoped that those hon. Members would support an Amendment allowing occupying tenants, as well as landlords and sanitary authorities, to borrow money for the employment of labour. It was not he who was confusing this question—it was the Government and those hon. Members who criticized his Amendment.

They were not considering the question of borrowing money for out-door relief. As one of the alternative forms of out-door relief, he suggested that liberty should be given to the Guardians to give money for the direct employment of labour, whenever that labour should be directed to such eminently useful classes of work as farming and other agricultural operations in Ireland. In the midst of such distress as at present existed, he ventured to impress this upon the Committee—always reserving his right to withdraw his Amendment in favour of a more general proposal, whenever it should be brought forward by Her Majesty's Government.

MR. O'CONNOR POWER did not think that the discussion which had taken place had been thrown away, notwithstanding the severe censure which had been passed upon the Amendment by the hon. Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell). He ventured to think that it was a very proper Amendment. There were two kinds of farming operations in which tenants could be employed—either on their own farms, or upon the farms of the Unions. He (Mr. O'Connor Power) was prepared to believe that the terms of the Amendment did not quite convey what was the exact meaning of his hon. Friends; but he reminded the Committee that one or two words would make the matter perfectly plain. He appealed to the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) to state his views to the Committee; and he had no doubt that the House would receive from him some suggestion which would carry out, on the one hand, the views of Her Majesty's Government, and, on the other, the opinions of the humble individuals who sat on that side of the House.

MR. SHAW regretted his absence from the House during a part of the discussion upon this Amendment. There was nothing he thought out of place in the Amendment which had been moved by the hon. Member for Dungarvan as to the employment of labour by the Board of Guardians on farming operations. He regretted that the hon. and gallant Member for Sligo (Colonel King-Harman) was not in his place; but he thought he could remember that in one of his speeches the hon. and gallant Member referred to had suggested the very same thing—namely, that the poor people might be employed on their own farms as the very best way of meeting existing distress. He admitted at once that, as a general rule, this would be an exceedingly dangerous operation; and he was sure that it was one which would be watched very carefully by the Guardians, because upon them would fall any loss which might accrue. His anxiety was that the Government should give Irish Members some idea that they had not a fixed determination against them, and that they should allow time for framing the Amendment precisely, as it involved a question of importance. They did not wish to violate the law, but to give power to the Guardians to employ labour. The people in distressed districts were bound to do something to relieve the distress; would it not be better to take 50 acres of land and employ labour in draining it? If the landlords would not act, let the Guardians act with the tenants in draining their land. The money given in relief in this way would be recovered; but in the other case it would be thrown away. Although he was not a lawyer, he felt himself competent to frame an Amendment that would meet this requirement, and he was quite sure that the Government could do so if they were willing.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN admitted that he had expressed an opinion that, where practicable, it would be extremely desirable to employ men in a state of destitution in the improvement of their own holdings, rather than to place them as labourers on public works. But he had gone closely into the question, and was very much afraid that in country districts it could not be found possible or practicable. He had tried it himself on a small scale in his own immediate district, where he considered it best to find out the holdings of widows and infirm persons who were unable to till their own holdings, and to employ the small farmers round about those localities in cultivating the holdings of those who, by the visitation of Providence, were not able to work themselves. He had found, from practical experience, that although, in a few instances, he could get this done by the neighbours, the difficulty was so great, and so much supervision was required, that he had been reluctantly compelled to abandon the idea of working in this way upon any large scale through the Boards of Guardians. He regretted that he did not see how supervision was to be carried out, and he was afraid that the money would in many instances be thrown away, that the work would be scattered, and that the whole scheme would prove disastrous. Going farther into the matter, he saw that under the present clause the Unions were able to borrow money for sanitary purposes, and there were very few Unions scattered through the country in which there were not sanitary works requiring to be effected of the most necessary character. He referred to sewage and other works, which would employ a large number of persons, if the Boards of Guardians availed themselves of the powers which they possessed. He thought there would be an ample supply of work for the people; and, speaking with great diffidence, he could not see how the desired result could be arrived at in the manner which had been suggested.

Mr. CHILDERS said, that it was not a question of the quantity of relief to be given, but whether the Government could not supplement the larger loans which it was proposed to make to landlords by smaller amounts to be expended under the direct charge of the Boards of Guardians, and which would, in the end, be an advance more directly to small tenants. That proposal was strictly on the lines of what had been done during the Lancashire Famine. He urged upon the hon. Member for Dungarvan that he should withdraw his present Amendment, on the understanding that the Government should promise to look into the arrangements which were made in the case of the Lancashire distress, and consider the proposal of the hon. Member for Cork, and that farther time should be given for discussion.

Mr. J. LOWTHER said, that the Government had carefully considered what machinery could be set in motion in the event of facilities being given for undertaking public works. Amongst other suggestions, it had been proposed that Boards of Guardians should be enabled to undertake the carrying out of certain public works. An alternative suggestion had been put forward to the effect that the baronial sessions should be empowered to carry out works of that description. The relative claim of those two bodies had been carefully considered. It was thought that as roads and works connected with roads would be the first objects which would be likely to engage the attention of any public body intrusted with the carrying out of public works that the road authorities of the district were the proper persons to choose. He was bound to say that the proposal to make loans to the farmers did not commend itself to practical persons. It had been proposed that loans should be made to the tenants for the purpose of cultivating their own farms, provided the consent of their landlords was obtained. He wished to point out that machinery already existed under the Land Improvement Acts, as extended by the present Bill, by which the landlord and the tenant were able to combine together for the execution of any work undertaken for the improvement of the land. If hon. Gentlemen would look at the Land Improvement Acts as amended by the present Bill, they would see that machinery existed under the present law by which, in the event of a combination between the landlord and the tenant, a loan might be obtained for the purpose of carrying out any improvement on the land. He failed to see that any good would be gained by re-considering the provision before the Committee, as, in the opinion of the Government, the proposal submitted in the Bill was well suited to meet the end in view.

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY observed, that the condition of the extreme West of Ireland was very different from that of any other part. It was no use talking of sanitary works for the employment of the people where towns and villages did not exist, and where such works could not be carried on. That portion of Ireland where the most distress existed consisted of mountainous districts, and of islands in the Atlantic Ocean, where no sanitary works were possible. If, as now proposed, Boards of Guardians were restricted to granting relief in kind, the people would receive their doles of meal and other things, and have to carry them miles away upon their backs to their own homes; but if power were given to the Boards of Guardians, under the superintendence of the Poor Law Board, to grant small sums of money to enable people to work upon their farms, the results could not fail to be of a very advantageous character. The works which were contemplated by the Bill were of a permanent character; but the grant of small sums of money would enable the peasants to put their farms in a position to receive the seed potatoes which it was proposed to distribute, and thus give some promise of a good harvest next year. His experience of Boards of Guardians was that it would not be necessary to restrain their acts of liberality; but that, on the contrary, they would require stimulating—for it must be remembered that every penny which the Board of Guardians distributed was to be re-paid by the persons who granted it. It seemed to him that the restraint imposed on Boards of Guardians assumed that they would lavishly distribute their own money. He had given some employment on the farms of tenants himself, and there was no difficulty about it. He believed that the idea entertained by the House of Commons, and by many others as to the Irish people, was that they were a lazy, worthless set, who preferred to be idle rather than to work. His experience with the Irish peasant led him, on the contrary, to think that he was one of the most hardworking persons on the face of the earth—but his labour was often ill directed because he had never been taught how to apply it. The Irish peasants required spades and other implements of husbandry for the cultivation of their farms; but they had not a shilling in their pockets wherewith to get them. It was proposed to give them clothes and meal, but no money; and without money they could not buy tools—for they had no credit. Unless power were given to the Guardians to grant small sums of money to distressed people he believed that a great deal of land which ought to be, and which could be cultivated, would be left untilled. Those advances could be made under the control of the Local Government Board. The Boards of Guardians could be allowed to make such advances for a period not exceeding two months; and if at the expiration of that time the Local Government Board found by means of the Reports of its Inspectors that the power had been abused, then it would come to an end and not be renewed. He sincerely trusted that the Government would introduce some words into the Bill enabling this to be done. In his opinion, it was useless to talk about drainage and other public works. Many such works would be useless when done; but much good would be effected by enabling the tenants to work upon their own farms.

MR. CHILDERS desired to draw the attention of the Chief Secretary for Ireland to the fact that, under the Land Improvement Acts, no advance could be made of any sum under £100.

MR. SHAW remarked, that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland had said that no practical person could think of adopting the suggestion which had been made. That was the most extraordinary statement that had ever been made in that House—although they had heard some very extraordinary ones. One of the greatest misfortunes suffered by the Irish in the present crisis was the Chief Secretary's want of knowledge of Ireland. He conducted the business of his Office, in a general way, with great ability; but he (Mr. Shaw) feared very much that the sympathies of the right hon. Gentleman were not such as to lead him to easily understand the extent of the misfortunes from which Ireland was now suffering—that was one of the greatest difficulties which they had to struggle against. He (Mr. Shaw) stated that as his opinion in a speech made some months ago in Dublin; and since that time some of the most practical men with whom he had come in contact fully concurred with him. The loans which might be made under the Land Improvement Acts were only granted on the initiative of the landlord; but he might be absent, or he might be frightened, or, it might be, in bad humour with his tenants, and so the tenants could not obtain a loan. In the case of sums under £100, he would give the power of making the advances to the Boards of Guardians; and with respect to advances over £100 he would leave the initiative with the tenant. In that manner, he was quite sure an amount of employment could be given which would not only relieve the distress now existing, but would permanently benefit the country. If the Government would not give the House an opportunity of fully considering these questions, of course they were in their hands; but they certainly would be acting in a manner which would not satisfy the people of Ireland.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER protested against the language used by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) towards his right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland. He was well aware that Englishmen were always liable to be told by Irish Members that they did not understand Ireland; but when his right hon. Friend was charged with being wanting in sympathy for the people of Ireland, and in conducting the business of that country without feeling with those for whom he was acting, he felt bound, on the part of his right hon. Friend, and on that of the Government, to repel the imputation. His right hon. Friend had fulfilled the duties of his Office with unwearied zeal, and had done his best, with the limited knowledge that an Englishman possessed of the requirements of Ireland, to deal with the questions that came before him. He felt sure that his hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) would withdraw the charge which he had made. With regard to the subject under discussion, the Government had felt a very great sense of responsibility. The Government had felt that by sanctioning the distribution of money in every possible way they would be exposing themselves to the risk of doing serious injury for the sake of gaining a little temporary popularity. The suggestions of his hon. Friend the Member for Cork were, of course, entitled to all respect; but he did not see how the Government could take advantage of them without exposing themselves to the charge of opening the door to jobbery, and burdening Boards of Guardians with tests and duties which they would be unable properly to perform. Whatever scheme might be proposed, it would be wrong, he thought, to attempt to introduce it into the clause before the Committee. The proposal made had reference to the best manner of advancing money for carrying on works; and when they came to that part of the Bill which dealt with advances, then such a proposal as that favoured by the hon. Member for Cork might be fairly considered.

Mr. G. E. BROWNE remarked, with regard to the loans under the Land Improvement Acts, that it must be recollected that the loans must be effected for a period of 42 years, and for not less than £100. He thought that if the Boards of Guardians had power to advance money it would be repaid. He trusted the Government would give the proposal their favourable consideration.

Mr. SHAW disclaimed any intention of imputing to the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland any deliberate want of sympathy with the feelings of Irishmen. In the conduct of the business of his Department, the right hon. Gentleman fulfilled his duties to the best of his limited knowledge. What he complained of was that the right hon. Gentleman's sympathies were not with the people of Ireland generally—that, in fact, he was a Tory of the Tories. The right hon. Gentleman had all the exterior of a modern man of fashion; but in his feelings he was a Tory of 70 years ago. He could not enter into the wants and feelings of Ireland, as, in his opinion, a Gentleman occupying his position ought to do. He really did not think that it was possible for him to understand the feelings and wants of Ireland.

Colonel KING-HARMAN said, that without going into the evil tendencies of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, he wished to draw attention to the points that had been raised by that discussion. The most important seemed to him to be that of advancing sums of money to small farmers for the purpose of working their own holdings. He was sorry to say that to that plan he saw a very grave objection. Any man who lived in the West of Ireland would know that one of the chief causes of the very great distress which now existed in those districts was from the small farmers being steeped in debt. He believed that the like state of things existed in the South. He did not see how the Government or Boards of Guardians could with safety make advances to men who were so steeped in debt that they could not procure credit for a bag of meal. It was a most deplorable thing; but it was, nevertheless, the absolute fact; and, no matter how much they might be helped during the present crisis, he felt very strongly that the Government would be obliged to pass some measure of local bankruptcy, to clear the people from the load of debt that now oppressed them, and enable them to hold up their heads again. Men owing sums of £20 or £30 were unable to effect a composition with their creditors; and some large measure of the kind he had indicated would, he felt sure, be necessary. He did not see how it would be possible, with safety, to add to the liabilities of those men by lending them money.

MR. O'DONNELL said, that the hon. and gallant Gentleman who had just spoken had well said that there were two points — one, that of advancing money to small farmers, and the other a question of affording out-door relief. The latter was the only point then before the Committee. He wanted to know what was to be done to save the small cultivators from starvation? They had no tools, no money, and were quite unable to procure the necessary implements of husbandry. What was the use of doling out to them sacks of meal and loads of bread? It was out-door relief in the shape of money that was required. The Boards of Guardians should have the power to give grants of money where that loan would meet the circumstances of the case. In a great many cases money would not be required; but there were many parts of Ireland where relief in that form only would be of use. Throughout the County Galway, for instance, there were many hundred cases of small starving cultivators who required loans of money and not sacks of meal. It was necessary that the Board of Guardians should be at liberty to advance sums of money to small farmers, and they should not be prevented from doing so by any rule passed by that House at half-past 12. The Board of Guardians throughout Ireland knew a great deal more concerning the nature of the relief required than that House, or ten Houses like it. It had been very properly stated by the hon. Baronet the Member for King's County (Sir Patrick O'Brien) — who, although he thought he was opposing, yet in reality was supporting him — that the money of the ratepayers it was that the Board of Guardians would have to distribute. They would keep a tight fist enough over the money in their hands —a very much tighter fist than the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had kept over the National Revenue for a number of years. The Guardians could not easily give out-door relief in money; but there were many cases in the South and West of Ireland where out-door relief in money would alone be of use. The Boards of Guardians included the magistrates and justices of the peace, and he could see no reason for not giving them some liberty in the matter. If they gave too much in one case they would make up for it by giving too little in another. They ought to have power to give out-door relief in money to the small cultivators, when doles of meat and bread alone would not tide over the exigencies of the present crisis.

MR. FINIGAN moved to report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Finigan.*)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, that this measure was one of very great importance to the people of Ireland, and had been brought forward as the most pressing Business of the Session. The House had considered it, in one form or another, for a very considerable time, and he had hoped that they would that evening finish the Committee on the Bill. It was obvious, however, that it was now too late to do so; but he thought that it would be an entire waste of time if the discussion which had now been going on for so long a time should be broken off, and Progress be reported.

MR. SHAW inquired whether the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer intended to proceed with the Bill that night? He certainly thought that a little more time was necessary for the consideration of the proposal which had been made. So far as his own Amendment was concerned, he was willing either to move that words carrying it out should be inserted in some other part of the Bill, or to introduce a new clause.

MAJOR NOLAN hoped that one Bill would not be run against another. He thought that the discussion of the clause might be proceeded with.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY observed, that it was not until they came to close quarters with a Bill of that kind that the House began to understand the points really in dispute. He did not consider the discussion that had taken place over that very important clause had been in any way a waste of time. He had, however, expected that the Chairman would have stopped a considerable part of the discussion, as not germane to the Business before the Committee. The marginal notes to the Bill stated that it was with regard to the extension of power in Boards of Guardians to grant out-door relief in food and fuel —so that the point which had been raised by the hon. Member for Cork referred to something totally different. The Committee had recently decided not to allow Boards of Guardians to grant sums of money to poor persons for general purposes. That appeared to him to be an unfortunate proceeding; but it could not be helped. The hon. Member for Dungarvan had now proposed to introduce words into the clause giving power to Boards of Guardians to grant relief in money to the small tenants, in order to enable them to cultivate their farms. He would wish to ask the House of Commons how the holdings of the small farmers could be cultivated unless such relief were granted them? The Government had obtained great credit for doing away with the disability that existed in England, and allowing Boards of Guardians to grant out-door relief. In England Guardians were empowered, during the Cotton Famine, to grant out-door relief in the shape of money to persons like those referred to in the debate. It was in their own discretion whether they gave money or not. He would ask hon. Members representing English constituencies, whether Boards of Guardians in Ireland were not as fit to be intrusted with the same privilege as was accorded to Guardians in their own country? On what ground could the Government justify its refusal to grant to Boards of Guardians in Ireland the same power of affording out-door relief that was enjoyed by analogous bodies in England? It was no use to distribute bags of meal and bread—the small farmers required money besides; and surely Boards of Guardians in Ireland ought to be treated, in the expenditure of their own money as trustees, on exactly the same terms as English Boards of Guardians. He entirely denounced the perpetual system of putting limitations upon the Irish public authorities—a system which was born of mistrust, either of their integrity or of their discretion. That was not the way to conciliate the Irish people; and if they were discontented he was not surprised, for everything showed them that they were mistrusted. He appealed to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to re-consider his decision, and to accept the Amendment of his hon. Friend. The former decision of the Committee had been only on the general principle; but now there was an opportunity of granting the Guardians power to make advances of money for purposes of cultivation to the small tenants of Ireland.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, that the observations of the hon. Member for Galway (Mr. Mitchell Henry) appeared to be entirely wide of the question before the Committee. They were considering the propriety of reporting Progress, and it was hardly correct to enter into discussion upon the merits of any particular Amendment. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) had asked for information with regard to the other Business to be brought before the House. The next Order of the Day was the Order for the Seeds Bill, of which there were the postponed clauses for consideration, and which would not give rise, he thought, to much discussion. He impressed upon the Committee that time should not be neutralized or wasted on the Motion to report Progress.

Mr. O'DONNELL thought that the hon. Member for Galway had not been very wide of the mark when he referred to the general nature of the discussion which preceded the Motion for reporting Progress; because the reason why that Motion had been brought before the Committee was that the Government had not attempted to perceive, and had not perceived, the point advocated by hon. Members on his side of the House. In what position was the Committee placed? Was it not that the Head of the Government in that House had persisted in ignoring what the Irish Members were aiming at? The right hon. Gentleman had behind him 200 English and Scotch Members for the purpose of making laws for the Irish people, whose lives were then at stake. The Government treated this question as one to be dealt with out of the Irish funds, when it ought to have been dealt with out of the Imperial funds. The position of the Government in this matter was that they did not care to understand what were the arguments put forward by Irish Members, and particularly by the hon. Member for Galway (Mr. Mitchell Henry), who himself represented one of the most distressed districts, and who knew thoroughly, by personal experience, the class of remedies most suitable to apply to this distress. After the hon. Member had taken up some time in explaining to the Committee the pitiable condition of affairs, he received an answer from the Government, which clearly proved that the Government had not either listened to him, or, for some occult purposes, was not disposed to appear to listen to him. That was not the manner in which to meet the Business of Irish Members, and it was merely playing with them and treating them as fractious children. The Government seemed to say—"We do not know what you have been talking about for the last half-hour—we have got our majority, and we intend to deal with this matter by means of our majority; we do not know what you want, and we do not care what you want; we shall do what we like, and we do not care for what you like." The Committee wanted to know what should be the position of the Business to be transacted under the Leadership of the right hon. Gentleman during the rest of the evening. If he meant that the Government, when they brought in any Bill, were determined to receive no Amendments from Irish Members, let him embody it under the Standing Orders. It was a farce to go on transacting Irish Business in this manner, with his large majority. He had said that seven more years of Tory rule would do good in Ireland; but a few more nights like the present would go far to drive home the fears which were already thoroughly prevalent in the minds of the Irish people.

MR. BIGGAR supported the Motion to report Progress. He had had some experience in the House with regard to the progress of Business after 1 o'clock, and he never had been able to discover that any progress was made; for either the Bill which, under those circumstances, was supposed to be passed by the House was so absurdly incorrect that, when it passed into law, there was no possibility of understanding it; or, otherwise, a wrangle was sure to take place, which lasted for an hour or two, when Progress would be reported. It seemed to him that there was no possibility of coming to a sound decision that evening with regard to the particular Amendment before the Committee, and certainly not with regard to any other Amendment which hon. Members might feel it their duty to bring forward. He had himself an Amendment to propose to the last paragraph of the clause, which he would like to have the opportunity of moving at a time when he could offer some arguments in favour of the course which he proposed. He would certainly not like to move that Amendment at 2 o'clock in the morning.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON hoped that the Committee would not agree to the Motion to report Progress until they had disposed of the Amendment of the hon. Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell). Hon. Members who asked the Committee to report Progress did so because it was said that the Chancellor of the Exchequer either could not, or would not, understand the meaning of that Amendment. Whatever might be the opinion as to that, he considered that the Committee were in as good a position to understand and decide upon the Amendment as it was ever likely to be, the hon. Member having already explained it at least three times. He wished to point out that the Committee would be in no better position to decide upon that Amendment even if it were deferred until Thursday next, when a very large number of hon. Members would be present who had not heard the protracted discussion which had already taken place; at all events, he thought that the Committee which had listened to the long discussion which had taken place should decide upon the Amendment which was before it.

MR. MACARTNEY said, that it had been remarked in the course of the discussion that whatever was to be done should be done quickly, and that while hon. Members were speaking the people of Ireland were starving, and that if speedy measures of relief were not taken the result would be alarming. It seemed to him that the speech which contained these remarks had been entirely forgotten by Gentlemen on the other side of the House, and it would seem that as much time was likely to be consumed upon this Bill as was expended upon the Mutiny Act of last year. He should have thought that those hon. Members who believed in Irish distress would have passed the Bill as soon as they possibly could. The House was not quite so obtuse as not to understand the meaning of the Amendment of the hon. Member for Dungarvan; and he (Mr. Macartney) appealed to hon. Members to proceed with the Bill without delay, or otherwise its discussion would occupy three or four weeks.

Mr. SULLIVAN pointed out that the hon. Member who had just sat down had evidently not read the Bill that was before the Committee, for he was clearly not aware that the things to be done had already been ordered. The hon. Member had told the Committee that whatever was to be done should be done quickly; but he (Mr. Sullivan) reminded him that this Bill was dealing with that which had already been done. He, as well as other hon. Members, were ready to remain in the House until 10 o'clock to-morrow morning for the purpose of getting through the Bill, and he did not think the Rules which had already guided them in the House ought to be applied at a time when the people of Ireland were starving. He deplored exceedingly that the excellent suggestion which had emanated from the front Opposition Bench had not been accepted by the Government—namely, that they should give to the Committee some indication that the principle which was really behind the Amendment of the hon. Member for Dungarvan, and which was followed in the case of the Lancashire distress, would be applied in the present instance. If that intimation were given, he was ready to remain in the House as long as might be desired for the purpose of passing the Bill. With regard to the adjournment, he believed it would be a mistake and a waste of the time that had been spent. He therefore appealed to his hon. Friend not to proceed with his Motion for the adjournment in the middle of that discussion.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY thought the Committee should proceed. The views of the hon. Member for Cork were not placed upon the Paper in the way of an Amendment, and until that was so he thought that a discussion thereon could not fairly and fully be taken. There were some Amendments on the Paper which, if the Committee proceeded, might be disposed of in a very short time. After that the Committee might turn to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork—he trusted with a far greater chance of success than they had at the present moment.

Mr. BIGGAR was sorry he could not agree with the suggestion of the hon. and learned Member for Limerick (Mr. O'Shaughnessy). He had just heard in private conversation an hon. Member say that, looking at the Amendment which appeared at the bottom of the page, it was better to give up the whole Bill rather than that the Amendment should not be carried. He thought that the best thing was for the Motion to report Progress to be withdrawn, in order to allow a division to take place upon the Amendment of the hon. Member for Dungarvan, when Progress might be reported, and a *bonâ fide* commencement made on the other side.

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY thought that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not treated him at all fairly in this matter. They were entitled to know from the Government, and he thought also from the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition, who desired to have a division upon the point, whether there was any ground for denying to the Boards of Guardians in Ireland the power which was given to Boards of Guardians in this country. That was the question to be decided. If the Amendment of the hon. Member for Dungarvan were negatived, the result would be that that very day a fresh disability would be imposed upon the people of Ireland.

Mr. J. LOWTHER said, that the Poor Law was applied in Ireland in the form in which it had been settled by Parliament. That settlement was come to deliberately by Parliament, and the present measure did not profess to make any permanent alterations in the Poor Law as it at present existed. This was simply an exceptional measure of temporary relief, and did not deal with any question of principle.

Mr. ASSHETON CROSS felt bound to point out that Boards of Guardians in Ireland were, under the existing law, able to grant relief to able-bodied paupers in Ireland.

Mr. O'DONNELL remarked, that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland had told them—what they knew already—that this was not a permanent measure. They knew well that no permanent alteration was contemplated; but they asked that, for three poor months, Boards of Guardians in Ireland might have the same power of relieving out-door distress in districts in Ireland, where the peasantry were starving, as was possessed by Boards of Guardians throughout the length and breadth of England. He rose to express a hope that the hon. Member for Ennis would withdraw his Motion to report Progress, and allow a division to be taken on the Amendment. He did not know whether the noble Lord the Leader of the Liberal Opposition would consider it a symptom of returning allegiance on his part; but he was bound to say that he took the course he did, in advising the withdrawal of the Motion, simply on his recommendation. If the Motion to report Progress were withdrawn, the Committee would then have an opportunity of enabling Boards of Guardians in Ireland to relieve the distress in the only way which would really meet the exigency of the situation. He was curious to see in what manner the noble Lord the Leader of the Liberal Opposition would act when that opportunity was presented to him.

Mr. FINIGAN said, that on the suggestion of the hon Member for Dungarvan he would withdraw his Motion.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY said, that Boards of Guardians in England had the power of granting out-door relief in money to poor destitute persons. During the time of the Lancashire Cotton Famine no Act of Parliament was passed to enable the Guardians to grant out-door relief in money; but they were permitted to do so by the Poor Law Board. On that occasion a liberal construction was put upon their power of granting out-door relief, and no questions were asked. That was the position in which Boards of Guardians in Ireland claimed, and rightly claimed, to be placed.

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

The Committee *divided:* — Ayes 29; Noes 127: Majority 98.—Div. List, No. 8.)

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Gibson) wished to move an Amendment, the object of which was to remove any ambiguity which might arise under the existing words of the clause as to whether the relief to be granted was to be confined to able-bodied persons or to be applicable to all. He begged to move, in Clause 3, page 1, line 23, after the word "Union" to insert "whether such poor persons under the Poor Law Act be entitled to relief in the workhouse or not."

Mr. SHAW said, that under the Bill as it now stood relief in food or fuel was to be granted to poor persons in any Union. He wished to insert the words "or in any electoral division thereof." It might be desirable to confine the power given by the Bill to some particular electoral division of a Union.

Mr. BIGGAR observed, that it was very inconvenient for Amendments to be proposed which were not on the Paper. He thought it would be much better that they should then report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress and ask leave to sit again." —(*Mr. Biggar.*)

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Gibson) observed, that the Amendment they were discussing was very easy to understand. He wished to make it quite clear that all persons could be relieved whether able-bodied paupers or not. The hon. Member for Cork County (Mr. Shaw) had then proposed that the relief to be granted could, if necessary, be confined to an electoral division of the Union.

Major O'BEIRNE supported the Motion to report Progress. It was decided by the House last year that Amendments which were not on the Paper should not be discussed.

Mr. SHAW expressed a hope that, as the Amendment was merely verbal, his hon. Friend (Mr. Biggar) would withdraw his Motion to report Progress.

Mr. BIGGAR said, that as he had been appealed to to withdraw his Motion he would do so on the understanding that no further progress would be attempted with the Bill at 2 o'clock in the morning. It was preposterous to proceed with a measure of this nature at so late an hour.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Gibson) said, that, unquestionably, the Bill was one of great urgency. Until the Bill was passed there was no power of compelling the Poor Law Guardians to grant the relief which the exceptional circumstances rendered necessary. It was also desirable that the Guardians should be in no doubt as to the persons who they might relieve.

Amendment *moved*, in page 1, line 23, after the word "union," to insert "whether such poor persons under the Poor Law Act be entitled to relief from the workhouses or not."

Amendment *agreed to.*

Amendment *moved*, in page 1, line 23, after the word "union," to insert "or any electoral division or divisions thereof."—(*Mr. Shaw.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

MR. FINIGAN moved to report Progress.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do now report Progress, and ask leave to sit again.—(*Mr. Finigan.*)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, that they had now reached an Amendment to be proposed by the hon. Member for Cavan, which would undoubtedly give rise to discussion; and it might be well, therefore, that they should not enter upon it at that hour. It would be desirable that the hon. Member should formally move his Amendment, in order that they might proceed at once to discuss it on the next occasion. The Bill was really one of great importance, and he hoped the House would support Her Majesty's Government in passing it at the earliest possible period. As had been pointed out, until the Bill was passed, there were no mandatory powers for compelling Guardians to grant the relief needed, and there were other points which made it desirable to pass the measure at the earliest possible moment. The mode in which the rates were to be charged, and other questions of that kind, which would very much determine the action of Boards of Guardians in making the rates, were at present undecided. For the present, they were simply acting upon the orders of the Government. He trusted they would be able to proceed with the Bill to-morrow.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON asked when the Committee would be resumed? There was an important discussion for to-morrow upon the Irish franchise.

MR. MELDON said, he understood from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the Government were prepared to make an arrangement by which the Bill could be proceeded with to-morrow; and he should have no objection to the Bill proceeding to-morrow, if the Government were prepared to assent to his Motion.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER regretted that he could not fall in with the proposal of the hon. and learned Gentleman. He should appeal to the hon. and learned Gentleman to allow the Bill to proceed to-morrow.

Committee report Progress; to sit again *To-morrow.*

SEED POTATOES (IRELAND) (*re-committed*) BILL—[BILL 58.]

(*Major Nolan, Mr. George Browne, Mr. P. J. Smyth*)

COMMITTEE.

Postponed Clauses 3 and 4 *agreed to*, without Amendment.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY asked whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer had considered the question of allowing a portion of the £5 to be expended for the purpose of manure? He had read in *The Farmer's Gazette*—the best agricultural journal in Ireland—that it would be quite useless to give seed to the tenants unless they were also given a small quantity of manure for the purpose of fertilizing it. He trusted that this suggestion would be adopted on Report.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he would not discuss the question as to whether or not the manure was necessary, but it would be extremely inconvenient to introduce into this Bill, which was intended for the purpose of supplying seed, a provision of the kind indicated; indeed, it would be entirely beyond the scope of the proposal. He did not know, but he believed there was no reason to suppose that there would be any greater deficiency of manure at the present time than there had been formerly in Ireland.

MAJOR NOLAN had been in hope that the Government would allow the Report of this Bill to be taken that evening. The question was an urgent one, and he thought the Order might be got through at one Sitting. He begged to move that the Standing Orders be suspended, and that the Report be allowed to be taken.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is not a question of suspending the Standing Orders; it is rather a question of departure from the general usage of Parliament. It is a course which can be taken with the general concurrence of the House, but not otherwise.

MR. J. LOWTHER thought Her Majesty's Government ought to complain if, after what had passed some time ago, they could not get further with the Bill than they had done that evening.

Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered *To-morrow.*

ANCIENT MONUMENTS BILL—[BILL 51.]

(*Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Beresford Hope, Mr. Morgan, Sir Richard Wallace.*)

COMMITTEE.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 (Definitions).

MR. MACARTNEY moved, in page 1, after line 16, to insert the words—

"The Court means in England and Ireland Her Majesty's High Court of Justice, and in Scotland the Court of Session."

Amendment *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 2 (Appointment of Commissioners).

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON believed that there had been considerable difficulty in finding anybody to take charge of these ancient monuments, and that first one and then another of the Government Offices had been applied to without effect. At last, the Trustees of the British Museum had been pitched upon. He did not suppose that anyone except the Financial Secretary knew who these Trustees were. He would, therefore, mention a few of them. The Board consisted of about 50 members, among whom was the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the President of the College of Physicians, and others of similar position. It was impossible to conceive men less likely to discharge such duties in a satisfactory manner than these preoccupied officials. The duties would, in fact, be carried out by the secretary and one or two zealous men, and the result would be that the Act would be carried too far and rendered unpopular. The Societies in whose hands he proposed to place the administration of the Bill were well-known Corporations, composed of men not only antiquaries, but men of large landed property belonging to the most conservative elements of society. They would probably themselves find money to do a great deal of the work without applying to the Treasury at all. The proposal would likewise vest in the Society of each country the guardianship of their own monuments. He therefore begged to move the Amendment of which he had given Notice.

Amendment proposed,

In page 1, line 24, to leave out the words "Trustees of the British Museum," and insert the words "Council of the Society of Antiquaries of London for England, the Council of the Royal Irish Academy for Ireland, and the Council of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland for Scotland."—(*Mr. Stanley Leighton.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON said, he did not wish to dispute the fact mentioned by the hon. Member who had just moved the Amendment, that the members of these Societies were very distinguished gentlemen. But, at the same time, the list which he had just given to the House of some of the members of the Board of Trustees for the British Museum showed also, from that particular point of view, that they, too, were certainly qualified to discharge the duty which would be imposed upon them equally well as those whom he desired to substitute in their place. On the part of the Government he could not assent to the plan proposed by the hon. Member. The Bill as it was drawn was a compromise between the hon. Baronet the Member for Maidstone (Sir John Lubbock) and the Government, in which the hon. Baronet accepted these gentlemen as custodians under this Bill; and, therefore, on the part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he felt bound to oppose any alteration of the agreement made last year, and up to this moment adopted in the various stages of the measure. He believed that the Trustees of the British Museum were perfectly well able to execute the duties imposed upon them; and they, moreover, commanded confidence in the country for the special purposes in connection therewith. He did not think it would be an improvement to take away from the Trustees of the British Museum a duty which up to this moment they were supposed to be going to discharge.

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK said, that, individually, he at one time would have preferred the proposals of his hon. Friend opposite; but, as the hon. Baronet had pointed out, there were strong arguments in favour of the Trustees of the British Museum. He did not doubt that the Trustees would carry out the Bill very efficiently. The hon. Member had spoken of Scotland; but Scotland was strongly represented among the Trustees. The Government had agreed to support the Bill, provided the working of it were intrusted to the Trustees of the British Museum. Under those circumstances, he should feel bound to vote with the Government, although he felt that the other Societies would have been very proper custodians of the monuments in question. He hoped that the Committee would support the clause as it stood.

Sir GRAHAM MONTGOMERY regretted very much that the Government had made up their minds to intrust the carrying out of the Act to the Trustees of the British Museum; but he hoped that before the Report they might be able to see their way to support the very reasonable proposal of the hon. Member for North Shropshire (Mr. Stanley Leighton).

Mr. PEASE said, it was almost absurd that the monuments of Scotland and of Ireland should be placed in the custody of the Trustees of the British Museum, when such bodies as the Antiquarian Societies existed in each country. He appealed to the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Stanley Leighton) to sustain his view, and he hoped that the Government would take it into their consideration.

Question put.

The Committee *divided* :—Ayes 19; Noes 18: Majority 1.—(Div. List, No. 9.)

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON said, he felt compelled to move to report Progress. The Bill was the result of an agreement come to between the hon. Baronet the Member for Maidstone and the Government last year. As the Committee had now reversed the decision arrived at, he would ask leave to report Progress then, in order that the further proceedings with regard to the Bill might be considered.

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK was surprised at the result of the division, but hoped that the Government would not press the Motion. The Bill had been under consideration for many years, and he did not like to lose any chance of its becoming law. He presumed they could reverse the late vote on Report.

Sir GRAHAM MONTGOMERY said, that he should like to know when the agreement between the Government and the hon. Member for Maidstone was made? When he left town last summer he understood that, as regarded Scotland, the Government were willing to make the Society of Antiquaries in Edinburgh the custodians of the ancient monuments of that country. He hoped the Government would not seek to reverse the decision which the Committee had arrived at.

Mr. PEASE wished to point out to the hon. Baronet the Secretary to the Treasury that if it were wished to bring the whole force of the Government to bear upon this small question it could be done upon the third reading of the Bill.

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON would ask leave of the Committee to withdraw the Motion, on the understanding that he should be at liberty to take the opinion of the House upon the Report. His Colleague the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer was best acquainted with the Bill, and he wished to speak to him before arriving at any decision with regard to it. He therefore thought that he should be best suiting the convenience of the Committee in withdrawing his Motion, and, if necessary, raising the question at another stage of the Bill.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present: Committee counted, and 40 Members not being present,

Mr. Deputy Speaker resumed the Chair:—House counted, and 40 Members not being present,

House adjourned at a quarter before Three o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 17th February, 1880.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILL—*First Reading*—Companies Acts Amendment * (9).

PARLIAMENTARY REPORTING — THE HOUSE OF LORDS.—QUESTION.

LORD SUDELEY asked the First Lord of the Treasury, When he proposes, in accordance with his promise of last Session, to move for the appointment of a Committee to consider what are the best steps to secure an accurate and efficient report of the proceedings of this House?

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD: I am of the same opinion as I expressed last Session on this subject. I think it desirable that a Committee should be appointed for the purpose, and I will move its appointment on an early day.

THE TRIPARTITE TREATY OF 1856.

OBSERVATIONS. QUESTION.

EARL GRANVILLE: The Question of which I have given Notice belongs to a class which it is better that Members of the Opposition should be cautious in asking, and which Her Majesty's Government ought, if they answer at all, to answer with great consideration. But in this case the responsibility does not lie with the Opposition. The initiative was taken by a very able Member of the Government—Lord George Hamilton—who stated in the North, while arguing the Eastern Question, that the Tripartite Treaty of 1856 was at an end—that it was no longer in force; and that a better substitute had been found for it in the Anglo-Turkish Convention, whose obligations were only contingent upon Turkish reforms. With regard to the latter proposition, some questions might be raised whether the substitute was an improvement—one Treaty containing no engagement to Turkey, and securing the aid of two great military Powers, one of whom was also a great maritime Power, in case of action being required; the other binding us to Turkey, to defend her without assistance from others. It is also open to discussion whether our obligations under the Anglo-Turkish Convention depend, as Lord George Hamilton says, upon reforms by the Porte; and whether, if our obligations are so limited, they are of much practical importance? It might also be asked how far this statement tallies with certain statements made by the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury) at Manchester, and questions asked by Viscount Sandon at Liverpool? But these are not matters which I wish to raise today. I wish merely to ascertain, as matter of fact, whether the Tripartite Treaty of 1856, with which your Lordships are well acquainted, is or is not now in force? Lord George Hamilton says it is not; and I should have thought he was undoubtedly right, if I were not awed by the fact that the highest political and legal authorities in the House of Commons do not seem to be altogether of that opinion. The Attorney General is reported to have made an apology for Lord George Hamilton, saying that he was not speaking accurately as in a Court of Justice, but, practically, as a member of a Conservative Association, which seems to be quite another thing. The Attorney General said that the Treaty was still legally binding, and that is a point on which the Attorney General's authority is, of course, of importance; but he added that it was thrown into the shade by the Treaty of Berlin. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in agreeing with the Attorney General as to the legal effect of the Treaty, said that, practically and politically, Lord George Hamilton was right. They consider the Tripartite Treaty still to be in existence, not having been formally abrogated by any subsequent Treaty, but only thrown into the shade by the Berlin Treaty. But by the first Article of the Tripartite Treaty the three contracting Powers guarantee among themselves—the Porte not being a party to the Treaty—the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire, as provided by the general Treaty of 1856. There is no general guarantee of the Ottoman Empire irrespective of limits, but merely a specific guarantee of the integrity of that Empire within the limits as they existed at the conclusion of the general Treaty. A new state of things was created by the Treaty of Berlin. There may be a difference of opinion as to how much independence and integrity may have been retained for the Ottoman Empire; but everyone will admit that the independence and integrity of Turkey since that Treaty is of a different sort to what it was in 1856. The Tripartite Treaty was not before the Congress of Berlin. But, although no specific reference was made to it, yet the three Powers consented to an arrangement to which it was no longer applicable, and they virtually abrogated the Treaty. In doing so by common agreement among themselves, they did not depart from the principle of the Black Sea Conference, which laid down—

> "That it is an essential principle of the Law of Nations that no Power can liberate itself from the engagements of a Treaty or modify the stipulations thereof unless with the consent of the contracting Powers by means of an amicable arrangement."

The Protocol does not require that such an amicable arrangement shall be in the form of a Treaty. So far from requiring a formal Treaty to get rid of an obligation to guarantee a state of things to which they had amicably agreed among themselves and with the rest of Europe to put an end, if they had wished to renew the joint guarantee it would have required a new document to give it force. It appears to me that it is not desirable, or of good example, that this country should announce to Europe that certain Treaties are legally, but not politically, binding; and it will be satisfactory, as the question has been raised, if the Prime Minister is able to concur with me in declaring that Lord George Hamilton was accurate in the statement he made as to the Tripartite Treaty being no longer in force. I therefore beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the Tripartite Treaty of 1856, by which Great Britain, Austria, and France guaranteed jointly and separately the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire, is still in force?

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD: My Lords, it certainly is somewhat difficult to maintain that a Treaty which has not been cancelled or abrogated is extinct. On the other hand, there is no doubt that various changes have taken place in the state of things which are referred to in the provisions of the Tripartite Treaty, and that no one of the co-operating Powers has signified its intentions to the co-signatories to take notice of those changes. No doubt, also, as has been suggested by the noble Earl, and as has been suggested also by others, the guarantee as to the specific integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire contemplated in the Tripartite Treaty cannot now be secured in the face of the circumstances which have occurred; and the question might arise whether a Treaty can exist, the purport of which it is impossible to realize, or whether, on the other hand, an equitable interpretation may not be placed upon it which might lead to consequences of a contrary character. The fact is, though the analogy is not complete, Treaties of this kind are something like Peerages in abeyance. They are not visible, and yet live; they are in a state of suspended animation; but yet no one would for a moment pretend that the Peerage does not exist. I read the speech of my noble Friend (Lord George Hamilton) with much satisfaction; and it appears to me that the noble Earl, though it may not represent his feelings and views as correctly as it does my own, looks also with some degree of pleasure at that address. I should say myself that if we view the question in a practical manner — the only way, I think, in which those who are responsible for public affairs would be justified in viewing it—the position would be this: I am not prepared myself to pronounce that the Tripartite Treaty has ceased to exist; but if this country were appealed to by the co-signatories of that Treaty to act under its provisions, I should take into consideration two circumstances—first of all, the changes that have taken place in the Empire which was the principal object of the Tripartite Treaty; and, secondly, the nature of the facts which Her Majesty's Government would have to consider and to deal with.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY asked their Lordships to consider what inconvenience might arise if the Tripartite Treaty were to be regarded as in any way existing. That Treaty did not guarantee the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire absolutely, but of that Empire as settled by the Treaty of 1856. The Ottoman Empire was, no doubt, still independent; but it was not now that Empire which was guaranteed by the Tripartite Treaty. It seemed to him that there remained no obligation of any sort or kind upon us in connection with that Treaty. He spoke in the presence of those who had more technical knowledge on legal points than he possessed; but, looking at the Tripartite Treaty in a political aspect, he thought that, viewed as a political instrument, that Treaty was absolutely and entirely dead. He hoped that was the general view taken of that Treaty; because he could not conceive anything more dangerous to the peace of Europe, or more unsatisfactory for this country, than that Treaties of the importance of that under discussion should remain, so to say on the Statute Book, to be acted on or not, just as it might suit the convenience of the Government of the day; for that was what the speech of the noble Earl (the Earl of Beaconsfield) had come to. He was quite aware that in the case even of Treaties of guarantee, whose binding character was not disputed, time and circumstances had to be considered when there was a question of carrying them into effect; but it was very desirable that when a Treaty of guarantee had fallen into such a condition that it could not be acted upon it should be regarded as politically and absolutely dead.

LORD CAMPBELL: My Lords, as my attention has been very often directed to the Treaty for the last five years, I feel bound to make an observation, which, however, will be much compressed, since it was only a few hours back I learnt that the House would be led to this discussion. According to reports generally faithful, in the other House, the Government have explained that the Treaty is still valid, whether or not its exercise is probable. In this House they could not use a different language. The whole subject is elucidated by Vattel in Book 2, Chapter 13, section 205, where he points out that Treaties of the kind can be dissolved, but only by the contracting parties. The contracting parties have not dissolved the Treaty; and it is, therefore, in existence. One circumstance which always favours the survival of a Treaty is the survival of the object contemplated by its framers. The object of the Treaty was to guard Constantinople and the Bosphorus against encroachment which might be perilous to Europe. That object is still cherished by the majority of nations. Another circumstance which favours the survival of a Treaty is the survival of the peril which created it. It cannot be denied that, since the war of 1877, Constantinople and the Bosphorus are held upon a tenure more precarious than they were before it. A further circumstance which favours the survival of a Treaty is the augmented power of the contracting parties to uphold it. Now Austria —if only from the occupation of Herzegovina and Bosnia—is better placed to defend Constantinople than she was after the Crimean War; France has reached a height of military organization superior to that which she possessed at the same moment. Great Britain is not, perhaps, more capable; but she is not less capable of acting than she was in 1856. These circumstances tend to the survival of the Treaty; but at least it is desirable to guard until you have the power to replace it. I should not have added another word had I not just listened to the noble Earl (the Earl of Kimberley) who has addressed us. The noble Earl has pointed out, with truth, that the Ottoman Empire is more circumscribed than it was when France, Austria, and Great Britain resolved to guarantee it. The guarantee cannot now belong to so large a territory as it formerly protected or surrounded. But his conclusion—namely, that the residue should be deprived of its support—appears to me ill-founded. If a proprietor of millions by some event had been reduced into the proprietor of thousands, the guarantee of the thousands which remained would be still more essential than that of the millions which had vanished. We must not forget that policy is the foundation of the Treaty; and it is easy to observe that its policy has been enhanced instead of being diminished by what has subsequently happened. If the Crimean War, instead of ending as it did, had overthrown the quadrilateral of fortresses in European Turkey, and formed another vassal Principality, Austria, France, and Great Britain would have been much more impelled to such a union as they entered into than after Russia had been driven back by various reverses. The noble Earl the Prime Minister has illustrated the position in a manner well adapted to come home to the apprehension of the House, when he referred to Peerages which, after a long abeyance, can be effectively revived. Even if the interpretation of the Treaty is a doubtful one, it is not doubtful that the public interest is more consulted by upholding than effacing it at present.

LORD SELBORNE said, it was far from the true method of considering the question of the existence of the Tripartite Treaty to introduce ideas which were foreign to that question. To talk of that Treaty as being "legally binding" and not "practically binding" was, to his mind, absolutely without meaning. The Treaty was a political contract binding on the good faith of the nations which were parties to it; but there was nothing about it in common with our notion of "law," as that word was technically and properly applied. The word "equitable" had also been used by the Prime Minister; but that also was inapplicable. There was no distinction between the obligation of the Treaty under one circumstance and another. The real question was, whether the Tripartite Treaty was capable of fulfilment—whether the whole subject-matter of that Treaty had not been changed by the joint and concurrent action of all the signatories to it? and if that were the case there was no necessity to say anything about it. Austria, one of the signatories, was in possession of a portion of the Turkish Empire with the consent of the others; England, by arrangement with Turkey herself, was in possession of another portion; and Russia of other portions—leaving the Ottoman Empire in a position to which the word "integrity" was wholly inapplicable. Thus, as a matter of fact, all the parties concerned had concurred in removing every possible application of the Treaty to the new state of things, and it was now as completely and entirely inoperative as if it had been abrogated in the most solemn and formal manner.

PRIVATE BILLS.

All petitions relating to Standing Orders which shall be presented during the present Session *referred* to the Standing Orders Committee, unless otherwise ordered.

House adjourned at a quarter before Six o'clock, to Thursday next, half past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 17*th February*, 1880.

MINUTES.]—SELECT COMMITTEE—Contagious Diseases Acts, *re-appointed* and *nominated.*

PRIVATE BILL (*by Order*) — *Second Reading*— Gaslight and Coke, Commercial Gas, and South Metropolitan Gaslight and Coke Companies.

PUBLIC BILLS—*Resolution in Committee—Ordered —First Reading*—Licensing Laws Amendment [76].

Ordered—First Reading—Metropolis Improvement Schemes Modification Provisional Orders * [77]; Charities (Ireland) * [78]; Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (No. 2) * [79]; Common Law Procedure and Judicature Acts Amendment * [80].

Second Reading—Medical Appointments Qualifications * [71].

Considered as amended— Third Reading — Seed Potatoes (Ireland) [68], and *passed.*

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

GASLIGHT AND COKE, COMMERCIAL GAS, AND SOUTH METROPOLITAN GASLIGHT AND COKE COMPANIES BILL (*by Order*).

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. ALDERMAN COTTON: Sir, I beg leave to move the second reading of this Bill, which provides for the means of ascertaining the pressure of gas supplied over any particular district, by self-registering pressure gauges keeping a constant register at the testing stations, and also by testings of the pressure at a certain number of street lamps, such number to be determined by the Gas Referees; also to provide for the present difficulty of ascertaining from what manufacturing station the gas is supplied to any particular place, and to render it possible by these means to assess the penalties, which under existing circumstances cannot be done, the gas from many manufacturing stations being mixed before it reaches the district where it is to be consumed. The hon. and gallant Baronet the Member for Truro (Sir James M'Garel-Hogg), who represents the Metropolitan Board of Works, has agreed, on behalf of that Board, to withdraw opposition to this Bill on the arrangement being made that that Board should not be included in the operations of the 21st clause.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Alderman Cotton.*)

COLONEL MAKINS, in rising to move that the Bill be read a second time on that day six months, said, he was aware that the course which he was asking the House to take—namely, to reject the Bill upon the second reading—was a somewhat unusual one. At the same time, where a Bill was exceptional in its character, or where its principles or provisions ran counter to the general practice of the House, the House had sanctioned such a course. He thought he should have no difficulty in showing the House that the Bill now before them was one of that nature. The measure, as had already been stated by the hon. Alderman who represented the City of London, was promoted by the Corporation of the City, and its object was to test the illuminating power, the quality, the purity, and the pressure of the gas supplied within the City by the Companies named in the Bill. All these matters were dealt with in the Acts of Parliament constituting the Companies affected by the Bill, and some of those Acts were passed so recently as the years 1875 and 1876. Indeed, the Corporation themselves, in the Petition which they presented against the Bill brought in last year by the Gaslight and Coke Company, which included, among others, provisions similar to those which they now asked for under this Bill, stated—

> "That when the Bill of 1876 was before Parliament it underwent a most careful consideration, and was only passed because it was considered that its provisions were of a salutary nature, and that they would greatly tend to improve the gas supplied in London."

Language of that nature was used by the Corporation no longer ago than last year. They now brought in a Bill to alter and amend these regulations. But that was not all. The Bill which was promoted by the Corporation of the City of London only dealt with a large area of the Metropolis outside the jurisdiction of the Corporation. He had heard the hon. Alderman the Member for the City of London state that the Metropolitan Board of Works were now with the Corporation in promoting this measure. This was only a very recent conversion, and perhaps his hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Truro (Sir James M'Garel-Hogg) would explain to the House how it was that the Metropolitan Board of Works had been induced to change their mind; for as late as the 6th of the present month the Board passed a resolution to petition against the Bill. It might be that the Metropolitan Board of Works would be very glad to secure the passing of the Bill if they could get all it proposed to do done for them, without having to call upon the ratepayers to provide any of the expense, the whole of the cost falling upon their rich neighbours in the City, who had plenty of funds at their disposal. It might probably turn out that some such engagement had been entered into between the Corporation and the Metropolitan Board of Works which had led to the opposition of the Board being withdrawn. He might add, further, that the Bill in its present shape dealt with three Companies, two of which supplied gas entirely outside the City limits. The third—the Gaslight and Coke Company—was the only Company which supplied gas within the City; and it supplied an area more than five times as great as that of the City itself. Therefore, even in regard to that Company, the controlling power of the City was very small if it were confined to the City area. That, however, was not the only area which the Bill sought to deal with; and, under all the circumstances, perhaps the hon. and gallant Member for Truro would explain how it was that the Metropolitan Board of Works had determined to abandon their opposition to this part of the Bill. There was only one other objection, but it was a somewhat strong one, which he desired to urge against the Bill. In all former arrangements for testing the purity and illuminating power of the gas, the penalties which had been placed upon the Gas Companies, had been placed upon them only, so to speak, by consent; that was, only when the Companies went to Parliament and asked for increased capital, or for an extension of powers. In that case, Parliament had imposed upon them from time to time fresh restrictions. It was, however, quite a new way of dealing with the matter for the Corporation of London suddenly, without any communication with the Gas Companies, to bring in a Bill imposing heavy penalties upon them, and placing them under galling restrictions which would hamper their arrangements and put them to serious trouble and expense. The Gas Companies had only one object in view, and that was to serve the public. They had no objection to such wholesome restrictions as Parliament might see fit to place upon them, and it was perfectly possible for the Corporation and the Board of Works to have arranged with the Companies such terms as might be satisfactory to the public, the Board of Trade standing by to see that the terms were fair and reasonable. If that course had been taken this opposition would not have been necessary; but considering the way in which the Bill had been introduced, and that it was an entire innovation upon the usual practice of Parliament, he felt he had no other course than to move that it be read a second time upon that day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Colonel Makins.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Sir JAMES M'GAREL-HOGG: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for South Essex (Colonel Makins) has rather challenged me to make some observations to the House with regard to this Bill. If he had not challenged me, I should still have felt it my duty, as Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works, and representing, therefore, many millions of the ratepayers of the Metropolis, to offer some observations on the Bill. I should certainly say, on behalf of my Colleagues and the ratepayers, we should have felt it to be our duty strongly to oppose the Bill on the second reading, but for the assurance of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of London (Mr. Alderman Cotton), who has told us that the Metropolitan Board of Works will be entirely cut out from the 21st clause. I must explain to the House that by that clause the cost of this Bill might have been thrown partially upon the City and partially upon the outside ratepayers under the Metropolitan Board of Works, instead of the City paying for it entirely themselves; and I may add that the Metropolitan Board of Works, not being the promoters, and having no control whatever over the expenditure of this, did decidedly object to have to pay money over the expenditure of which they had no control. My friends in the City and ourselves had two or three meetings on the subject, and we were anxious to promote legislation; but the City wanted to go further than the Board of Works. That Board only wanted to amend existing legislation. There are difficulties of a certain character with which the House will not be familiar. Testing-houses are supplied in various places with regard to the manufacture of gas, and it is found impossible to carry out the existing law when any defect is found in the supply. We have to go before a magistrate, where we are asked where the gas, of which we complain, is manufactured, and we are unable to say, and the Metropolitan Board would be very glad if we had an amendment of the law which would enable us to answer such a question. Their anxiety was, however, to have a friendly amendment of the law, and not to have a long and expensive litigation with the Gas Companies; and, therefore, they were not able to go as far as our friends in the City. But my hon. Friend the Member for the City of London having given the assurance on behalf of the City Remembrancer, who is the authorized officer of the City, that he will withdraw the Metropolitan Board of Works from this clause, I, on behalf of that Board, assured my hon. Friend that I would not oppose the second reading; but I reserved to myself and my Colleagues the full power to go the Committee and endeavour to amend the Bill, because I must tell the hon. Alderman that there are things in that Bill which we, as a Board, cannot in any way consent to. At the same time, I am one of those who think when Bills are brought in here they ought to have a fair hearing on the second reading, unless they contain some very vicious principles which we cannot recognize. Therefore, on behalf of my Colleagues, I shall not oppose the second reading; but I shall reserve to myself full power to deal with the matter in the way I have mentioned. But my hon. Friend the Member for the City of London went a little too far, because I cannot say that we are with him. We are only partially with him in our desire to remedy an acknowledged grievance, but not in going further than we think it is desirable to go at present.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL, as a householder of London, wished to express a hope that the House would not take the unusual course of throwing out the

Bill upon the second reading, and before it had been subjected to the examination of a Select Committee. The people of London submitted to heavy tyrannies, and the heaviest tyranny of all was that of the Gas Companies. Speaking from practical experience, he believed that the Gas Companies failed to secure either good gas or economy. Indeed, it seemed to him that there was no place in the whole civilized world where the gas supply was as bad as that of London. In other parts of the world, in the provincial towns of Scotland, and in most parts of the Kingdom, they had a gas supply which, if it was dear, was also good; but here in London it was not only dear, but dirty. It filled their houses to a most unreasonable degree with dirt and filth; it ruined their eyes when they attempted to make use of it; it blackened the ceilings and walls, destroyed the paint, and rendered their houses almost uninhabitable. He knew the excuse of the Gas Companies was that the law kept down the price of the article. No doubt, the law did regulate the price of gas; but if it fixed a maximum price for gas the Gas Companies contrived to take it out in badness, which badness was certainly much more marked than the cheapness of the commodity. Having had some experience in the matter, it appeared to him that the gas in London, far from being cheaper than the good gas supplied to Edinburgh and other places, was in reality a great deal dearer, as the gas bill could testify. It so happened that in his own house in Scotland he had gas supplied under special circumstances from a long distance at a rate three times the rate of the London gas. Yet, at that high rate, his bills were not half as great as they were with the bad gas supplied in London. He was sure there was something radically wrong in the matter; and he was prepared to support any measure which would secure the testing of the gas supply, and afford some prospect of ascertaining wherein the badness consisted.

MR. J. G. TALBOT agreed with the hon. Members who had spoken that it was always undesirable to reject Bills of this kind on the second reading unless a very strong case were made out. In this case, he thought no such case had been established; and he hoped his hon. Friend the Member for Essex (Colonel Makins) would not press his opposition to the Bill. It related to matter which the Board of Trade had not had now for the first time in hand. In point of fact, they had it in hand at the present moment, and were communicating with the various Gas Companies, with the Corporation of the City of London, and with the Metropolitan Board of Works. More than that, they had sent this Bill to the Gas Referees, from whom they expected shortly to receive a report. He was quite willing to go as far as the hon. Member for Essex in deprecating arbitrary interference with, and harassing restrictions upon, the Gas Companies; but, at the same time, he was of opinion that, in this instance, a case for legislation had been made out. What the Board of Trade desired was that the various parties should be brought together with a view of ascertaining if it were not possible to bring them into harmony. Any Bill that was calculated to carry out such an object the Board of Trade would do their best to promote; but it must be clearly understood that the Board of Trade would have nothing to do with an opposed Bill upon this subject. Taking all the matters into consideration, he thought the House would agree with him that the best course to adopt in the interests of the public would be to read the present Bill a second time, and defer the next stage until the Board of Trade could have an opportunity of conferring with the parties.

COLONEL MAKINS said, that after the remarks which had been made by the hon. Members who had just addressed the House he would not put the House to the trouble of dividing. He had only objected to the measure on the ground which he had already explained, and he knew that it was not quite in accordance with the general practice of the House that Bills of this nature should be dealt with on the second reading. He was afraid that he would not be in Order if he were to notice the remarks which had fallen from other hon. Members; but perhaps he might be allowed to say that the Companies had never made any such excuse as that which had been imputed to them. They had never complained of the maximum price which Parliament had placed upon the gas supplied.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed.*

QUESTIONS.

THE INDIAN PRESS—NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENTS IN THE FIELD.

Sir CHARLES W. DILKE asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether the rules for the guidance of editors of newspapers and of correspondents with an army in the field, which were communicated through the Press Commissioner to the Indian Press in October last, are now to be considered as being withdrawn?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: Sir, we have no official information on the subject; but I understand that these Press regulations have been practically withdrawn.

MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, SOUTH KENSINGTON.

Mr. J. HOLMS asked the First Commissioner of Works, When the Museum of Natural History at South Kensington will be opened?

Mr. GERARD NOEL: Sir, the building is now practically completed, and will be handed over to the Office of Works by the contractors in a few days. The necessary fittings for the Botanical and Mineralogical collections are being made; they will be ready at an early date, and admit of the removal of these collections taking place in the course of the summer, which, I believe, is the intention of the Trustees of the British Museum.

SLAVE TRADE (CONSOLIDATION) ACT —DISPOSAL OF SLAVES.

Mr. ANDERSON asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, with reference to amended Return No. 381, Are the slaves under the heads "Sent to Natal," "Sent to Seychelles," and "Zanzibar Mission," sent to these destinations to work as free labourers, or under any system of indenture; and, is it under regulations made by the Treasury as prescribed by the 10th section of the Act, or have any such regulations been made?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: Sir, the Navy are not in any way responsible for the disposal of slaves. They fall under the jurisdiction of the Court which condemns the captured vessels, and the officers of Her Majesty's ships have nothing further to do with them. But, as a matter of fact, I believe that, as regards the slaves handed over to the Zanzibar Mission, the children are sent to the different mission schools, Roman Catholic as well as Protestant. Adults are taught trades where they show an aptitude for mechanical labour, and others are drafted off to the various mission stations on the mainland, where they form the nuclei of free villages. In Natal and the Seychelles they are dealt with under Colonial Acts or regulations, which authorize their indenture for not exceeding five years; on the expiration of allotment they are on the same footing as ordinary free labourers. There were only three liberated slaves in 1878 sent to Natal, and one to the Seychelles. No special regulations under the 10th Section of the Slave Trade (Consolidation) Act have yet been issued by the Treasury.

PARLIAMENT—QUALIFICATION OF VOTERS, MIDLOTHIAN.

Mr. HARDCASTLE asked the Lord Advocate, If his attention has been called to the sanitary condition of a huge barrack recently erected at Tynecastle, just within the borders of Midlothian, for the reception of nearly two hundred families, the building of which had been carried on by night and day throughout the late severe and protracted frost, with a view to its occupation before the 31st January, in order, it is alleged, to qualify the tenants for the electoral roll of the current year in the interest of the right honourable gentleman the Member for Greenwich, who is a candidate for the representation of that county; whether he is aware that part of the building has already been condemned by the local authorities as unsafe; whether, nothwithstanding, families have been allowed to enter into occupation in its present damp and incomplete condition, and with no provision for sanitary or hygienic arrangements; and, whether, under these circumstances, he will order an inspection of the building to avert, if possible, the epidemic which the sudden aggregation of so large a number of persons under such conditions will, in all probability, generate?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. Watson): Sir, I have caused inquiries to be made into the various matters with which the Question of the hon. Member deals, and as the information which has reached me is not precisely the same as that which seems to have reached the hon. Member, I would ask the leave of the House to state the facts as they have very recently been communicated to myself. These facts are that during the present winter several blocks of dwelling-houses have either been erected or are in the course of erection—for I believe that is a matter on which there may be considerable difference of opinion—in the county of Midlothian, just outside the Parliamentary boundary of the City of Edinburgh. These buildings are all of such a class that every dwelling-house contained within them will be sufficient to yield a county qualification to the proprietor, but not to the tenant. None of the houses are occupied as yet; and, as far as I have been enabled to ascertain, it is not intended that any of them shall be occupied prior to the term of Whitsunday, the 15th of May next. All the blocks except one, which is in a much less advanced stage than the rest, will probably be occupied on and after the term of Whitsunday, and the proprietors will probably claim the privilege of being entered as voters on the electoral roll made up for Midlothian during the present year. The one block I have referred to is in such a state that it is not probable any claim for the franchise will be made in respect of it before the year 1881. A portion of the front walls of that particular block was, in consequence of a defect, owing either to faulty design or workmanship, recently taken down by the builder, and is now in the course of re-erection. No part of any of the blocks has been condemned by the local authorities as unsafe, and the authorities charged with the protection of the public report to me that although the buildings are not first-class specimens of architectural work, at the same time there is no defect in the design or character of the buildings which would warrant the conclusion that any danger is threatened to the public. I have found it impossible to ascertain whether, at the time these buildings begin to be occupied, the sanitary arrangements connected with them will be sufficient or not. I am very happy to say that among the multifarious duties required by the Lord Advocate, he is not expected to act as inspector of dwellings—but the duty of sanitary inspector and the removal of nuisances of every class has been committed by the Legislature in that particular district to the local authority of the parish of St. Cuthbert's, subject to the control of the central board of supervision. I have no reason to suppose that either of these authorities will fail in the discharge of its statutory duty should there be any occasion for their interference, and it is only in the event of such failure on their part that interference on my part would be in the least degree justified. I have only to add that, under these circumstances, I have not thought fit to order such an inspection as the hon. Member has suggested.

MR. HARDCASTLE: Do I correctly understand the right hon. and learned Gentleman that the person entitled to vote will be the owner and not the occupier?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. WATSON): I think I stated that the blocks, which are at present divided into houses, are so divided that the qualification of a single house will be to the proprietor and not to the tenant of that single dwelling.

REGULATION OF RAILWAYS ACTS—THE RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS.

MR. MONK asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether it is the intention of the Government to take any steps, by legislation or otherwise, to define the powers of the Railway Commissioners under the Regulation of Railways Acts in consequence of the recent judgment in reference thereto by the Court of Queen's Bench?

MR. J. G. TALBOT: Sir, my noble Friend is unavoidably detained; but I have no difficulty in telling the hon. Gentleman, in answer to his Question, that the recent decision of the Queen's Bench in the well-known case of the Railway Commission being under appeal, it is impossible for the Government to come to any determination in the matter until that appeal has been disposed of.

ROUMANIA—THE JEWS.

MR. SERJEANT SIMON had the following Question on the Paper:—To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government and of the Governments of France and Germany, as stated in the Foreign Correspondence of the "Times" of Saturday and to-day, soon to recognise the independence of Roumania; if so, whether and how the stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin are to be carried out, requiring, as a condition precedent to such recognition, that all Roumanian subjects shall, without regard to race or religious profession, be placed upon equal footing in respect of civil and political rights; whether it is the fact that out of a Jewish population of about 250,000, of whom about 200,000 are natives, a vast number being descendants of those who settled in the country four centuries ago, the Act of Emancipation passed by the Roumanian Legislature as a fulfilment of the Berlin Treaty restricts emancipation to categories numbering altogether not more than 2,000 or 3,000 Jews, while it leaves the rest as hitherto, without civil rights, and, in defiance of public law, aliens in the land of their birth, and that being Jews, without a country of their own according to Roumanian law judicially declared, without even the protection extended by civilized nations to other aliens; whether Her Majesty's Government will accept such a measure as a fulfilment of the stipulations of the Berlin Treaty; and, whether they have required and have received assurances from the Roumanian Government of their intention to extend the emancipation to the rest of the Jewish subjects?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER observed, that the Question was one of very great length, and that his attention had only just been called to it. The matter was one on which it would be necessary for him to consult the Home Secretary; perhaps, therefore, the hon. and learned Member would put off his Question until some future day. It was desirable that a few days' Notice should be given of Questions involving considerations of policy.

MR. SERJEANT SIMON said, he would put his Question on Friday.

EGYPT—FINANCE.

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether Her Majesty's Government are continuing negotiations for the appointment of an International Commission of Liquidation in relation to Egyptian finance; and, if so, whether such negotiations are likely to lead soon to the appointment of such Commission; and, whether, before concurring in the appointment of such a Commission, Her Majesty's Government will ascertain from the Law Officers of the Crown whether the decisions of the Commission can be made binding on British subjects, and that Her Majesty's Government will not render themselves responsible for any loss incurred by British creditors in consequence of such decisions?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, negotiations are in progress with other Powers for the appointment of an International Commission in Egypt; but it is at present impossible to say whether they will or will not be successful. Until the conditions are decided it will be premature to make any statement with regard to the second part of the Question; but the subject will not be lost sight of.

MOROCCO—OUTBREAK AT FEZ.

MR. SERJEANT SIMON asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether any official accounts have been received respecting the recent outbreak at Fez against the Jews, many of whom were seriously injured, while an old man seventy years of age was killed, and his body burnt by the mob; whether any instructions have been sent to our Consular representative on the subject; and, whether, seeing the precarious position of Non-Mahommedans in Morocco, it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to continue the Consular protection hitherto extended to them?

MR. BOURKE: Yes, Sir; the details of this outrage have reached Her Majesty's Government; and we have been informed that Sir John Hay, Her Majesty's Representative at Tangiers, has addressed to the Vizier of the Emperor of Morocco a remonstrance on the subject. A copy of that remonstrance has been sent home, and Her Majesty's Government think that it has been couched in language suitable to the occasion, and approve of the course taken by Sir John Hay. With regard to the second part of the Question of the hon. and learned Member, the Protectorate afforded by foreign Cousuls in Morocco is now under the consideration of many

Powers, and these Powers are in communication with Her Majesty's Government on the subject.

PARLIAMENT — PRIVILEGE — MR. PLIMSOLL.

SIR CHARLES RUSSELL asked the honourable Member for Derby, Whether certain placards reflecting on his conduct as a Member of this House, which have been posted all over Westminster, and are signed "Samuel Plimsoll," have been issued with his knowledge and assent?

MR. PLIMSOLL: Sir, those placards were written by me and printed and distributed by my direction. The statements contained in those placards are perfectly correct, and I believe the language in which I have spoken is well within the limits which are proper to fair criticism of the conduct of public men.

SIR CHARLES RUSSELL: Sir, in consequence of the answer I have received from the hon. Member, I hope, as I am about to address the House upon a matter of Privilege, they will permit me to do so. I hold in my hand one of the placards which the hon. Member has posted all over Westminster, and, in order that I may make the circumstances intelligible to the House, I will state that the hon. Member having given Notice of a Bill called "The Merchant Shipping Grain and Cargoes Bill," I put upon the Paper a Notice that it be read that day six months, with the view and with the sole purpose of obtaining for that Bill a full and impartial inquiry. I was aware that by so opposing the Bill I should shut it out from discussion after half-past 12 at night; but I think that a Bill of such immense importance, affecting the price of grain and also the liberties of the shipowners, deserved that attention which I now hope it will receive. I will, with the permission of the House, read the language of which I complain, and which the hon. Member thinks it fit to justify, and I will conclude with a Motion in order that I may put myself in Order. [An hon. MEMBER: That is not necessary.] The placard itself is addressed to my constituents, and it is headed in very large letters, "Sir Charles Russell, M.P." It goes on to describe the names of vessels which have been lost, and the serious injury and loss of life which have ensued in consequence, and then it appeals to my constituents to know whether they will allow during another winter, in consequence of my having blocked this Bill, a repetition of these disasters. [*Cries of* "Read!"] It is a lengthy placard; but if the House wishes I will read every word. [*Continued cries of* "Read!"] The placard is as follows:—

"Sir Charles Russell, M.P.

"To the Electors of Westminster.

"Last year these steamers were lost at sea: the 'Bernina,' the 'Joseph Pease,' the 'Surbiton,' the 'Telford,' the 'Homer,' the 'Zanzibar,' the 'Bayard,' the 'Capella,' the 'Emblehope,' the 'Heimdall,' the 'Tiara,' the 'Commonwealth,' the 'Trident,' the "Aberfeldy,' the 'Burgos,' and the 'Alfonso.'

"In the first six, all hands (one hundred and sixty-one men) were drowned. In the 'Telford' and the 'Surbiton' alone more lives were lost than in the Tay Bridge disaster.

"Nearly all these ships were laden with grain only; one or two had besides grain a little general cargo.

"It is universally admitted that loading ships with grain in bulk is the principal cause of these losses, that to put it in bags or sacks would ensure safety.

"A Bill was before the House of Commons to make it compulsory to load ships with grain in sacks or bags, and so stop this dreadful loss of life.

"This change in the Law is strongly advocated by the Chamber of Commerce of Newcastle-on-Tyne; also by that of Gateshead. On Monday the Chamber of Commerce of Glasgow appointed a Committee to assist in passing the Bill. The Shipmasters' Association of the whole of the North of England have petitioned for it. The Bill is backed by Mr. Joseph Cowen, Mr. Anderson, and Mr. Gorst; its object is approved by all the Shipowners in the House of Commons; at least, no one was found to oppose it; and its Second Reading was anticipated last night by everyone.

"There is a rule of the House that no Opposed Business shall be taken if it comes on after half-past twelve. It was evident the Bill could not be reached before that time, so a Notice of Opposition would be fatal to the Second Reading.

"There was no Shipowner in the House willing to put down that fatal Notice.

"It was, however, put down by Sir Charles Russell, your Member!

"I ask you is it your wish that next winter should be as this—that hundreds of precious human lives, and hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of property should be lost?

"I ask you to say, whether, if Sir Charles Russell has done this thing of his own motion, it is not inhuman? and, if he is merely the cat's paw of some who wish to oppose (but dare not openly for fear of their Constituents) it is not degrading!

"Electors of Westminster I appeal from your Representative to yourselves.

"Samuel Plimsoll.

"28, Park Lane, W.,
"Feb. 12th, 1880."

I wish to appeal to the House to know whether, in the exercise of my simple and undeniable right, and with no other object than honestly and faithfully to discharge my duty as an independent Member of this House, I am liable, whilst Parliament is sitting and whilst the Bill is in progress, to be assailed in this manner, and to be placarded as inhuman, and to have my conduct characterized before my constituents as degrading! I wish, therefore, in order to bring the question to an issue, to move the following Resolution:—

"That the publication of printed placards throughout the City of Westminster, representing the part taken by Sir Charles Russell, the Member for the said City, in the proceedings of this House as 'inhuman' and 'degrading,' injuriously reflects upon the said Member, is an attempt to coerce and intimidate him in the discharge of his duties, and a breach of the Privileges of this House."

Mr. MOWBRAY: I rise, Sir, to second the Motion of my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Westminster. I can assure the House and my hon. Friend the Member for Derby—if he will allow me so to call him—that I have no feelings against him, and I hope the House will not be led away from the consideration of the question brought before it. I have sat for 27 years in this House, and I believe I have never opened my lips before in any matter affecting a breach of Privilege. I have never interfered in questions that have arisen between this House and some obscure person outside. This, however, is not at all a case of that kind. It appears to me a most flagrant breach, not merely of the courtesy that ought to exist between one hon. Member and another, but of the Privilege of the House, for an hon. Member to come down and avow that he has placarded the walls with a bill so scandalous as that which my hon. and gallant Friend has just read. Do not let the House mix—as hon. Members opposite seemed inclined to do—the two questions of the merits of this Bill and the conduct of the hon. Member for Derby. Of the merits of the Bill I know nothing. As to the conduct of the hon. Member in times past, his efforts for the benefit of our seamen have had my hearty sympathy, and some of his measures have had my support. So far as this Bill is concerned, from what I have heard, I approach it with no unfavourable view. Do not let us get into the question of the merits of this Bill; but when a Member, in the exercise of his undoubted privilege, says the Bill is of such consequence that it ought not to be disposed of without consideration after half-past 12 o'clock, and puts down the Notice which he is justly entitled to put; and when he is interfered with in the discharge of his duty by a placard, not emanating from some obscure quarter, but signed by a Member of this House, who is not ashamed to say he ordered it to be printed and distributed, then I say it is time for the House to take some notice of it. It is an attempt to coerce and intimidate a Member of the House of Commons. Of course, no one who knows my hon. and gallant Friend would think that the words "inhuman and degrading" would for an instant fit the noble character of my hon. and gallant Friend. The charge itself is utterly absurd, as many of us know. But, absurd as it is, it involves an attempt to create an idea amongst my hon. and gallant Friend's constituents that he is capable of inhuman and degrading conduct, and to act as a terror and a menace to him in the discharge of his duty. Therefore, with great reluctance, I am obliged to second his Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the publication of printed placards throughout the City of Westminster, representing the part taken by Sir Charles Russell, the Member for the said City, in the proceedings of this House as 'inhuman' and 'degrading,' injuriously reflects upon the said Member, is an attempt to coerce and intimidate him in the discharge of his duties, and a breach of the Privileges of this House."—(*Sir Charles Russell.*)

Mr. SPEAKER requested the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster to bring up the placard to the Table of the House.

Mr. ONSLOW: As I, too, have incurred the wrath of the hon. Member for Derby, and as I, too, have been placarded in my borough, I should like to say a few words, for I think my case is even somewhat stronger than that of my hon. and gallant Friend. The hon. Member for Derby has not only sent these placards down to my borough, but he has also put himself in correspondence with the local paper, and has asked the editor to insert the placard in his issue of last Saturday. Therefore I, too, am paraded before my constituents as inhuman and degrading. I have no objection to strong language which an hon. Member may use towards another in this House—if he goes beyond Parliamentary usage Mr. Speaker calls him to Order, and he there and then withdraws the objectionable language; but I say that when I put down conscientiously a Notice of opposition to the hon. Gentleman's Bill because I do not wish to see hasty legislation in so important a matter, I can only say that the words used by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby are words which must have the effect of intimidating an hon. Member in the exercise of his duties. Neither I nor my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Westminster have done anything more than the Rules of the House allow us to do. We oppose this Bill according to the legitimate laws of this House. We have exercised no particular privilege, and I am sorry the hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby has not expressed his regret to the House—not only to my hon. and gallant Friend and myself—for the language he has used. This is not a personal question between me and the hon. Member for Derby. It is a question which affects the working of every measure which comes before this House, and affects individually and collectively the privileges of us all. And if such course of action is allowed to be taken by hon. Members of this House, it must necessarily tend to prevent freedom of debate and proper discussion. I have heard it said that the hon. Gentleman had done this in a hurry, that he is enthusiastic in his cause, and sometimes is forgetful of what he may do; but when he comes down here, and, after he has had time for reflection, expresses no regret of any kind—when he, to use a nautical expression, "sticks to his guns"—I think it is a most serious question for this House to consider. The hon. Member now says that every word in that placard is true, and so, before the whole House, he accuses my hon. and gallant Friend and myself of "inhuman" and "degrading" conduct. I can conceive no more gross intimidation; but, so far as I am concerned, I am now perfectly prepared to leave the conduct of the hon. Member in the hands of the House.

MR. SULLIVAN: I rather think that the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster is not correct in point of form in the way in which he has brought this question before the House. We have need to be careful, because we are narrowing every day in some respects the freedom of debate. I rather think that we should have had this placard brought up to the Table and read by the Clerk at the Table, and that thereupon a Motion might be founded; and I observe that the hon. and gallant Gentleman has not provided himself with—he certainly has not cited to us — any precedent for the course he has taken upon this occasion. If he will refer to Parliamentary precedents, he will find that there never has been a Motion of this kind treated in this way. However, the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) does not stand on any point of form, and he is here to-day with that manliness which has characterized his conduct throughout, and, upon all occasions—daring much peril and frequent misunderstanding — he is here to-day taking upon his head, in the face of the House, the full responsibility for the placard he issued. What is the question before us? That the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster performed an act of obstruction, as it is called, when practised by other hon. Gentlemen. ["No!"] I say that I have heard like Notices given under the half-past 12 Rule by the hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) referred to over and over again as "blocking Notices" and as "obstructing Bills." There is a different complexion put on the character of the proceeding when it is done by hon. Gentlemen opposite. The hon. and gallant Member for Westminster told us that he had the most conscientious motives, and that his desire was to secure that full and free discussion which it ought to receive—that, in the interests of the Bill, he put a blocking Notice on the Paper to obstruct it. Was that a specimen of the genuine sincerity and candour of the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster? Would I insult this Assembly by pretending that hon. Members do not know that a blocking Notice is an act of obstruction designed to strangle a measure by the Forms of the House? I have heard the hon. and gallant Gentleman himself complain that Irish Members would not go on with the public Business at 2 o'clock in the morning. The placard contains a statement as to the loss of life through loading grain in bulk. Is that controverted? It also states that Chambers of Commerce and shipowners own that the remedy proposed by the Bill would be in the interests of humanity, and whoever obstructs, in this House or out of it, an attempt to save human life, is certainly practising in effect, if not in intent, inhuman conduct. I claim the right to say that the votes we gave for the Afghan War or South African War—[*Cries of* "Question!"]—I say it is the Question, because I have seen this language used about votes in this House. The only substantial part of the accusation complained of is that in reference to inhumanity. [An hon. MEMBER: "Degrading."] First, with regard to inhumanity, I say, candidly, considering that my hon. Friend the Member for Derby has been unintermittingly labouring in the cause of humanity, and that when the moment comes when he might hope to get the second reading of his Bill he finds the second reading obstructed, and every effort used to strangle and destroy the measure by a process which those who practise it will admit is only had resort to by those who are hostile to it—I say that I deny that that is humanity. Then, was it degrading? I do not think the expression can be taken in any other than a hypothetical sense. If the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster was merely the catspaw of somebody who wished to oppose the Bill, but dare not, for fear of his constituents, I do not know that I should use the phrase "degrading;" but I should find a Parliamentary phrase that would express the same idea. That is what I might do if I believed, which I do not believe, that the hon. and gallant Member has been the catspaw of another. My hon. Friend (Mr. Plimsoll) has the most profound respect for the liberties of this House as a collective Assembly, and for the liberty of Members individually; but he appeals to the House not to be led away on this occasion. Has the hon. and gallant Member any precedent? I see sitting on the Treasury Bench an hon. and gallant Gentleman (Sir James Elphinstone) who, describing other forms of what he considered to be obstruction, used much stronger language, and who, during the last Recess, regretted that he could not get at certain Members on this side of the House, and there were some hints of violence. I may say that if he does cross the floor of the House, angered by anything that appeared to him like obstruction, although he might come on belligerent purposes intent, we should receive him here with good humour and try to keep him with us. The hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Onslow) has addressed the House. Parliamentary obstruction of Public Business is an offence which one hon. Member is not allowed to charge against any other hon. Member, but he has probably run to the closest verge of committing Parliamentary obstruction. He is the most skilful practitioner of the art. I intend to vote against this Vote of Censure of my hon. Friend (Mr. Plimsoll), and I hope I do not in any way commit him by expressing my own regret that he should have used, even in a hypothetical sense, the phrase "degrading." But I sympathise thoroughly and heartily in the spirit which has animated him in the issue of this placard. The Bill to which reference has been made was a Bill in which all the interests supposed to be adverse to him agreed with him. ["No!"] The shipowners agreed with him. ["No!"] Now, at all events, we will see who had the courage to oppose it. It was strongly advocated by the Chamber of Commerce of Newcastle-on-Tyne, and by the Chamber of Commerce of Gateshead. The Shipmasters' Association of the whole of the North of England petitioned for it. Was I far short of the truth, then, when I said that the interests opposed to it as might have been supposed, have manfully and humanely come forward to advocate it? What would be the natural result of the obstructive Notices to this Bill? Why, that the Bill will fall through, as many Bills fell through last year, and that by reason of the course taken by the hon. and gallant Gentleman, the slaughter of human life was to be continued. And I say to my hon. Friend, believing that this is not a matter of sentiment, but the saving of precious human lives, I appeal to him to stand manfully to his measure, but to guard himself carefully against excesses of language that might play into the hands of his astute and skilful enemies who wish to hinder his work. I appeal to this House not by any fatal precedent to encourage conduct so detrimental to Public Business, so manifestly designed to arrest an action of humanity, nor because of any warmth of language used by my hon. Friend, say that he is to be answered, as I hope he never will be, by a censuring Vote of the House of Commons.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON: Sir, I rise to make a suggestion to the House which, I think, if adopted, may enable us to arrive at the most prudent decision on this question. I am perfectly aware that it is usual that a question of Privilege, when it is raised, should be decided at once; but in this case there are some reasons why I think it desirable that the consideration of this case should be adjourned. When any question of Privilege is brought before us, the House is generally in possession of full knowledge of the facts and the words complained of; but on this occasion, although I heard the Notice of the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster (Sir Charles Russell) last night, I was not aware, until I heard the placard read, what were the statements made by the hon. Member for Derby of which the hon. and gallant Gentleman complained. Well, there is another point in this case which appears peculiar. I have never heard a case of Privilege brought forward in this House without the Member who brought it forward supporting his Motion by quotations of precedent. Now, I notice, as has been noticed by the hon. and learned Member for Louth (Mr. Sullivan), that neither the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster nor the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford (Mr. Mowbray) referred to one single precedent bearing on this case. I cannot say, having come down to the House without any clear knowledge of the complaint that was going to be made, that I have been able, and other Members and the Government have probably been unable, to make themselves fully acquainted with the nature of the complaint. Now, it appears to me that the House will be extremely anxious to bear in mind two considerations—First, it will not be anxious unduly to strain or to stretch beyond former precedents the law of Privilege; and I think, at the same time, they will not desire that conduct such as that which is complained of on the part of the hon. Member for Derby should be tolerated, or that undue interference outside the walls of this House for the purpose of intimidating Members in discharge of their duty, if the conduct complained of does not come strictly within the rules of Parliamentary usage, should be regarded with any favour. I cannot hesitate for a moment to say that I deeply regret the language which has been used by the hon. Member for Derby. There can be no doubt that it is language, as has been admitted by the hon. and learned Member for Louth, that we must all regret. I must also say I regret the hon. Member has not taken the earliest opportunity of withdrawing the expressions to which objection has been taken. At the same time, a most cursory reference to the book to which we always refer on these occasions—I mean Sir Erskine May's *Practice of Parliament*—shows that innumerable cases of this sort have been brought before the House, and with very different results—that in some cases action had been taken, and the person complained of had been punished. But, as far as I can see, in the more numerous class of cases, the House has decided not to take notice of the complaint made. I think that our conduct in this case ought to be strictly guided by precedent. If we find that such conduct has been formerly held to be a breach of Privilege, then I think the House will not be disposed to condone the conduct of the hon. Member for Derby. But if, on the contrary, conduct of a similar description has been passed by without serious notice, then I am sure the House will not be anxious to stretch the law of Privilege further than it is at present. I think that we should come to the consideration of this question better prepared to give a decision if we were to adjourn the debate so as to consider the case, and to obtain the Parliamentary precedents applicable to it. I beg leave to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*The Marquess of Hartington.*)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, I am quite sure that the whole House will feel that in this matter much more is at stake than merely the question which is raised by the hon. Member for Derby, and by my hon. and gallant Friend, and the right hon. Gentleman who sits behind me. The question, as far as it rests between the hon. Member for Derby and my two hon. Friends who have been aggrieved by this proceeding, is one upon which, I think, there will be very little difference of opinion in the House. I think almost everybody, while entirely acknowledging the purity of the spirit which animates the hon. Member for Derby, must at the same time admit that his course in this matter has been such that everyone must regret. The language which he has used is, I am sure, language such as hardly any Member would like to apply to a brother Member, and such as certainly is most inapplicable to men of the high character of my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Westminster and my hon. Friend the Member for Guildford. I also join with the noble Lord in expressing my extreme regret—and I believe the regret of the great body of the House—that the hon. Member for Derby has not, when challenged upon this occasion, taken the opportunity of expressing his regret. I cannot think that there would be anything unbecoming in his doing so, and I believe it was a course which everyone expected he would follow. Now, with regard to this matter, I think we ought to separate the particular question which has given rise to this unfortunate incident from the great principle involved in the question raised by my hon. and gallant Friend. By the Motion which he has submitted, my hon. and gallant Friend asks us to declare that such an appeal to the constituents of any Member, as has been made in this case by the hon. Member for Derby, is in the nature of an intimidation of a Member in the discharge of his duties, and that that being so, it is in the nature also of a breach of Privilege. Now, Sir, this House is jealous, and justly jealous, of its Privileges, and I am bound to say that as time goes on, and as we are more and more aware of the influence which the constituencies exercise, and the interest they take in public matters, so it becomes more and more important that we should rigidly and narrowly scrutinize our Privileges in these cases. Certainly it does seem to me that at first sight the hon. Member for Derby, if he thought that he had reason to complain of the course taken by my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Westminster and my hon. Friend the Member for Guildford with regard to this Bill, ought to have brought that matter forward in this House. He ought to have made any observations that he desired to make in their presence, and to have given them thereby the opportunity of at once explaining and justifying the conduct they had pursued. I do think it would become a most dangerous practice if it were encouraged that appeals should be made to persons out-of-doors whilst Parliament is sitting in regard to the actual current Business of Parliament, with a view not to comment upon the course that Members had pursued in their Parliamentary capacity, but in regard to the actual Business which is before us at particular times. Well, I say that that is a matter of a very serious character, and one which must demand the attention of the House. I entirely agree with the noble Lord that it is one of those matters which ought not to be decided upon hastily, and that it is one in which we ought to be guided by precedent; and I entirely concur in the suggestion the noble Lord has made that a Committee should be appointed to search for precedents in this matter, and I am ready to assent to the Motion which has been made for an adjournment of the debate. I am aware that there may be a natural feeling on the part of many Members that a matter of this sort should be brought to an issue and decided at once. I would remind hon. Members of what is at stake, and that in questions of this kind we should guard the Privileges of this House by a calm and judicial examination of the question, apart, as far as possible, from the necessary heat and feeling with which we cannot help regarding a personal question. I am prepared to agree with the noble Lord in the course he has suggested.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON: Sir, one word of explanation. I only moved the adjournment of the debate. I did not make any suggestion of a Committee; but if the right hon. Gentleman thinks a Committee should be appointed, I shall be very happy to consider that suggestion; but my suggestion was that the debate should be adjourned in order that we might be in a better position to decide upon the question.

MAJOR O'GORMAN: I beg leave to assure the hon. Member for Derby that when his Bill is brought before the House I shall vote in his favour. I must say, however, that the words "degrading" and "inhuman," as applied to the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster are very hard words indeed; and I would most earnestly recommend my hon. Friend to immediately withdraw them.

MR. C. M. PALMER said, he had been requested by the owners of the *Tiara* and the *Trident* to correct an error into which the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) had fallen. The hon. Member had quoted those two vessels as having been lost in consequence of carrying grain cargoes. He (Mr. C. M. Palmer) had received telegrams to say that one of those vessels had been run down off the Goodwin Sands, and that in neither of them were any souls lost. One of the ships, according to the telegrams, was not even grain-laden. The hon. Member for Derby, in his placard, had laid great stress upon the fact that the shipowners of the North had been in favour of his Bill. As President of the Newcastle and Gateshead Chamber of Commerce he might say that there was a very divided opinion in the Chamber in regard to the Bill, and also among the shipowners of the North generally.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *Friday.*

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE ACTS—THE ASSIZES.

SIR HENRY JAMES asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the attention of the Government has been called to the unnecessary attendance of Her Majesty's Judges in several counties during the recent Assizes; and whether it is in contemplation to take any steps, by centralization or otherwise, to prevent the continuance of the serious loss to the public service which is caused by the absence of the Judges from Westminster?

MR. ASSHETON CROSS, in reply, said, he was quite aware that a good deal of valuable time was lost under the present system, and that he had watched the course of the Assizes to see whether some better arrangement could not be made. He must, however, express a hope that no attempt would be made to alter the present system so far as the trying of prisoners four times a-year was concerned. Something might be effected in the way of meeting the difficulty to which the Question of the hon. and learned Gentleman related by means of grouping, and longer notice as to the number of trials might be given, in order that when the Judges went on Circuit they might be able to apportion the time which it would be necessary to spend in each town which they had to visit better than it was possible for them to do as matters now stood. He would only add that the subject was under consideration.

POOR LAW (SCOTLAND)—LEGISLATION.

SIR ALEXANDER GORDON asked the Lord Advocate, Whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to introduce this Session a Bill to amend the Poor Law of Scotland?

MR. ASSHETON CROSS, in reply, said, that his right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate had been engaged in preparing a Bill on the subject, which he would introduce this Session when a convenient opportunity for doing so presented itself.

ARMY—LEEDS CAVALRY BARRACKS.

MR. WHEELHOUSE asked the Secretary of State for War, How often the barracks (known as Her Majesty's Cavalry Barracks) at Leeds have been "condemned," with the date or dates of any "condemnation," and by whom made; whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to take any and, if so, what remedial measures in the matter; and, when any remedy, if in contemplation, will be applied?

COLONEL STANLEY, in reply, said, that the barracks had, technically speaking, never been "condemned." They had, however, frequently been adversely reported on, and he had no hesitation in saying that they were, in many respects, in a bad state. He proposed to take a certain amount in the Estimates for this year for the purpose of remedying some of the principal defects, but he was afraid the state of things complained of would not be altogether removed.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANKS.

Mr. WAIT asked the Postmaster General, Whether he proposes to introduce a Bill having for its object the extension of the powers and usefulness of Post Office Savings Banks?

Lord JOHN MANNERS, in reply, said, he was afraid he could not give the hon. Gentleman a more definite answer than had been given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to a Question put by the hon. Member for Hackney, on the previous evening—that the matter was under the anxious consideration of the Government.

MOTIONS.

BOROUGH FRANCHISE (IRELAND).

RESOLUTION.

Mr. MELDON, in rising to move the Resolution of which he had given Notice, said: Sir, in again calling the attention of this House to the subject of the Irish Borough Franchise, I am not certain but that I should best discharge my duty by merely formally moving the Resolution, instead of adducing facts and arguments which must be familiar to every hon. Member of the House. The present occasion, however, is so opportune for a settlement of the question, that I have come to the conclusion it is better to go into some little detail on the subject. The Amendment, of which the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis) has given Notice, seeks to pledge Parliament to the proposition that it is inexpedient to deal with the question of lowering the Borough Franchise in Ireland; or, in other words, he wishes to pledge this Imperial Parliament to a policy denying to the people of Ireland equal rights under the Constitution to those enjoyed by the other inhabitants of the United Kingdom. I sincerely trust that now, on the eve of a General Election, in the present critical state of Ireland, after denying for 12 years to the Irish people the same measure of justice as was granted by a Conservative Government to England and Scotland, this House will no longer, at the bidding of a Government influenced by solely Party considerations, withhold the claim so persistently put forward by the vast majority of the Irish Representatives, that on this question of the franchise Ireland will be treated as an integral part of the Empire. I am not altogether without hope that the result of my Motion will be favourable, for this House, I am bound to say, has on previous occasions shown itself not disinclined to act justly to Ireland in this matter. In 1876, a Resolution similar in terms to that now brought forward was rejected by a majority of only 13 votes, and in 1878 the same Resolution was lost by a majority of only 8. What the object of the Government—upon whom lies responsibility in this matter—can be in steadily refusing to grant this simple measure of political equality, unless it is the ignoble one of a fear to lose two or three seats in Parliament, I am at a loss to understand. On each occasion when this subject was discussed, the Government, for merely Party motives, used all their influence to bring about a decision which, I must say, was as unjust as it was mischievous. The result of this action of Her Majesty's Government has been to convince the masses of the Irish people that justice is not to be had from the Imperial Parliament, and that the assertion so frequently made during the past few years in this House that equal rights are granted to all Her Majesty's subjects throughout the United Kingdom is merely an idle boast. What is the issue which has to be decided tonight? Is it the question of the expediency of lowering the franchise or conferring household suffrage? Not at all. The question to be decided is, whether this House is prepared to carry out the contract made on the part of the British nation at the time of the Union, that the Irish people should have equal representation with the rest of the United Kingdom. I do not ask the affirmance or adoption of any new principle, nor do I desire to go outside the doctrines proposed by the Party opposite and adopted by this House to sustain my proposals. Let us see what it is that Irish Representatives claim to have decided by this House. In the boroughs of England and Scotland, household suffrage has been in existence for 12 years —that is to say, in the English and Scotch boroughs every male inhabitant of full age occupying for 12 months as tenant or owner a dwelling-house rated to the relief of the poor, having paid a certain part of the poor rate, is absolutely entitled to be registered as a voter. In Ireland, where it is said we have equal rights, no man is entitled to the franchise in boroughs by right of occupation unless he has been in occupation as owner or tenant for 12 months of premises rated at an annual value of more than £4, and has paid certain rates; but this is not all, because, although the rateable value of the premises is nominally over £4, in reality the value must be at least over £6, because in Ireland the valuation is not made on actual letting value, but is in every case one-third and usually one-half lower; so that in Ireland the value of the premises must be over £6, though nominally only £4. In Ireland, too, owing to the difference in the rating laws, large numbers of persons are disfranchised who would not be so if legislation was similar for the two countries. I do not propose going into these questions as to rating which will be raised on the discussion of the Bill introduced by the hon. and learned Member for the City of Limerick (Mr. O'Shaughnessy); but will content myself by quoting by-and-bye some figures on the point of a very startling nature. At present, I will dismiss the subject with one remark—namely, that whereas in England legislation has taken place on the principle of facilitating the acquisition of the franchise by persons entitled, in Ireland legislation seems to have been based on the principle of throwing impediments and obstacles in the way of those acquiring the much more limited franchise there conferred. Is this state of affairs just or reasonable? Ireland, being the poorer country, should, in all fairness and equality, have the lower franchise. This principle is one which has been acknowledged by Parliament. Up to 1867, the qualification for the borough franchise was lower in Ireland than in England, being £10 in England and £8 in Ireland. The position of the two countries was changed in 1867. Why, in Ireland, must the value of a man's house be over £4, whereas in England and in Scotland the value of a man's house does not in any way regulate his right to the franchise? I will refer, by-and-bye, to some few statistics which will prove incontestably the injustice which is done to Ireland by the dissimilarity of the franchises; but, before passing to that question, I must glance at the principle upon which the borough franchise is based in England and Scotland, and point out that a different principle is the basis of the Irish borough franchise. Under the Reform Act of 1850 it was necessary, to entitle a man to be registered as a Parliamentary voter in any borough in Ireland, that he should occupy a house of the rateable value of £8, and the borough occupation franchise was based on the principle that a man was not entitled to exercise the political right of voting for a Parliamentary Representative unless he was a man of sufficient substance to occupy a house of a certain value. In fact, the test as to the right of a man to political power was a property one. In England the same principle was acted on; but, inasmuch as Ireland was the poorer country, the franchise in England was higher, being a £10 occupation qualification. In 1867 a great change of front took place. The old qualification of property, as entitling a man to share in political power by giving him a vote in boroughs, was swept away, and a new basis for the franchise was adopted, so far as England and Scotland were concerned. And by whom was this great change brought about? Who were the persons responsible for this new departure? Why, the Party who now, under the guidance of the same Leader, refuse to Ireland the boon they conferred on the rest of the United Kingdom, and who now insist that the old property qualification in 1867, decided to be unsuitable as the test to be applied as entitling Englishmen and Scotchmen to the franchise, is the proper one to be applied to the people of Ireland. On this point I ask the House to accept the statement of the Leader of the Conservative Party when introducing the Reform Bill of 1867. The Prime Minister, on that occasion, stated—

> "That the basis of household suffrage and the principle upon which the provisions of the Bill creating the borough franchise was founded was that if a man pays his rates and has resided a certain time, that is *primâ facie* evidence that he is a man of regular, methodical, and dutiful course of life, and, on the whole, in a borough, is a very good test of the right to the franchise."

Over and over again the Earl of Beaconsfield, then Mr. Disraeli, during the progress of the Reform Bill of

1867, impressed on the House of Commons in his speeches this principle, and asserted that residence and payment of rates in boroughs was the test of the right to the franchise, and not the value of the house occupied. I put it to the hon. Members opposite, if this is not a noble, grand, and lofty principle, that in boroughs a man's right to participate in the management of the State is to be judged by his stake in the country, not ascertained by the test of his ability to live in a valuable house, but by his ability to keep a roof constantly over himself, his wife and family, and by the punctual payment of his contribution towards the funds necessary for the support and maintenance of his poorer brethren? This is the principle upon which the borough franchise in England and Scotland is based; this is the groundwork of the great edifice of household suffrage raised by the Conservative Party in these countries, and I am at a loss to know why this great principle is not extended to Ireland, and why the property qualification for the franchise, abolished for England and Scotland in 1867, is still retained in Ireland, against the protestations of the very large majority of the Irish people and their Representatives. Has an Irishman, supporting and maintaining his family under his roof, and contributing to the support of the poor, a less stake in his country, is he less entitled to vote for a Member of Parliament who has power to bind his person and his property, than an Englishman under similar conditions? Why should the test of the right to the franchise in boroughs be payment of rates and residence in one part of the United Kingdom, and the ability to live in a valuable house be the test in another? What reason exists why an Irishman, so long as he resides in a house in England, should be entrusted with political power, and be considered unfit if he changes his residence to a house in Ireland of equal value? Why should a man occupying a house, say in Liverpool, of the annual value of £4, be thought unfit for the franchise if he goes to Dublin and resides in a house of equal value? There is no justification for such a state of law. What, therefore, is the reason this grievance is not remedied? Why is it that whereas up to 1867 Ireland had a lower franchise than England she now has a franchise, not only higher than the rest of the United Kingdom, but based on a different principle? Surely the Government cannot be criminal enough to seek to deprive those persons, who, taking an active part in political matters, ask the Irish people to trust in the utility of "constitutional agitation," of the stringent argument they have against the use of unconstitutional means for the redress of their grievances. Does this House, by refusing so reasonable a request as is now made, wish to convince the Irish nation of the hollowness and unreality of the assertions so often made in debates and by responsible persons in Parliament that equal rights are given to the inhabitants of the three countries comprising this so-called United Kingdom? I wish hon. Members sitting on the opposite side of this House before they proceed, in obedience to the dictation of the Government, to vote against this Resolution, would calmly consider the effect on the Irish people of their vote, and for a moment think of the responsibility they undertake when, by their acts, they repudiate the Act of Union, which purports to secure to Ireland equality of representation and equal rights with England and Scotland. What do hon. and right hon. Gentlemen mean, when they tell us that the Imperial Parliament is willing to give equal rights to all the inhabitants of the Three Kingdoms? In no matter is this of more importance than in the case of political rights. Is not the Union based on equality of representation? Yet, in Ireland, we have a limited franchise. Large numbers of the inhabitants of that country who, if they lived in England or Scotland would enjoy political power, are excluded from voting for Members of Parliament, and we are told that the Irish nation have the full benefit of the Union. What have the Irish people done to be thus deprived of their rights? Is this House willing to deal with Ireland as an integral part of the Kingdom as they would with Lancashire or the poorest part of Scotland? Here is a test. Sweep away the differences existing between the franchise in Ireland and that existing in England and in Scotland—assimilate the rating laws, admit the people of Ireland to representation in this House as fully as the English and Scotch—assimilate our municipal franchise to your own.

I will now proceed to prove, by quoting a few statistics, the great differences which exist between the representation of the boroughs in Ireland and the boroughs of Scotland and England. The city of Glasgow, with a population of 477,732, returns three Members to this House by the votes of 61,069 electors. All the boroughs in Ireland, with a population of about 900,000, return 31 Members by the votes of 55,257 electors; Manchester, with a population of 379,374, has a constituency of 60,463; Birmingham, with a population of 343,787, has 65,506 electors; Liverpool, with a population of 493,400, numbers 61,026 on its Parliamentary register. It is an astonishing fact, and demonstrates the justice of the claim now brought forward, that one city in Scotland has a constituency larger in number by 5,812 than the total number of electors in all the boroughs of Ireland put together. But, wherever we look for facts connected with the representation of the Irish boroughs, the same startling state of affairs exists. Scotland, with a population of less than 3,500,000, has in her boroughs more than 200,000 voters; whereas in Ireland, with a population of more than 4,500,000, there are only 55,257 electors. England, with a population of 22,500,000, has considerably more than 1,500,000 of electors in the boroughs. If the comparison between the numbers of electors in English and Scotch boroughs and Irish boroughs is made, the same startling results will be found. Dublin, with a population of 267,610, has only 12,607 voters; whilst Leeds, with a population of 259,212, has 49,074 electors; Sheffield, with a population of 239,946—several thousands less of population than Dublin—has a Parliamentary register three times in excess of that city, and numbering 39,270; and Edinburgh, with 196,979 inhabitants, has 28,340 electors, as against the 12,607 of Dublin. To take another Irish town. Cork, with a population of 100,000, returns its Members by the votes of 4,626; whereas in Nottingham, with a population of only 86,600, there are 18,292 voters. In Limerick, with a population of 49,853, there are 1,930 electors; and in Gateshead, with 48,627 of a population, there are 12,096 voters. In Belfast, where the population is 174,413, and where the number of persons rated for tenements over £4—sufficient to entitle them to the franchise—is 25,708, the constituency is 14,990. I admit that a certain allowance must be made for double occupation, for female occupants, vacant premises, and for cases where the rates are unpaid, but I contend that the figures quoted fully substantiate my case. But, then, it is said the result of a change in Ireland similar to that which took place in England and Scotland in 1867 would be essentially different. It is said by hon. Members opposite that in Ireland the number of persons who would be enfranchised if the same franchise existed as in England would have such a disproportion to the persons at present with the franchise as entirely to change the representation, and it is said that this was not the operation of the Reform Act of 1867 in England and Scotland. This is a repetition of the same argument as was brought forward by the opponents of reform in England, but it not prevent a Conservative Ministry from passing the Reform Act of 1867. Let us see how this is. In England, the result of the Reform Act was to treble the borough constituencies. I take the dates of 1866 and 1877 to prove this statement. In 1866 there were 500,000 persons in the boroughs with this franchise. In 1877 there were 1,514,716 borough electors. In 1866 there were 45 boroughs with less than 500 electors; in 1877 there was not one. The constituencies in England were, therefore, trebled by the change, whereas the result of the Irish Reform Act was to add but 20,000 throughout the entire of Ireland. If the franchise was lowered in Ireland, as is sought, the borough constituencies would not be doubled; in fact, it would only add 56,902 to the present electoral roll, and so bring the whole borough constituencies of Ireland to something like 100,000 voters. In conclusion, I must thank the House for the great kindness which has, on this as on previous occasions, been shown to me. No matter what the result may be, I have no cause of complaint of want of opportunity to bring forward my case. I regret my inability to advocate the great cause of the enfranchisement of the Irish people more forcibly; but, amongst my Colleagues, there are those who will make up for my serious shortcomings, and to them and the righteousness and inherent strength of my case I now leave it. I have pointed out that the borough franchise in Ireland was based on a different principle in Ireland from that in the rest of the United Kingdom. I have shown what the result of such a difference is, and I now appeal to the House to remove a slur which has been put upon the people of Ireland, and to affirm the proposition that Irishmen are entitled to equal rights as Englishmen and Scotchmen, and I trust that in this matter of the franchise the appeal now made to the Imperial Parliament will be acceded to. As long as household suffrage exists in England and Scotland, Ireland, entitled to equal rights under the Act of Union, which the House ought not to treat as waste paper, is entitled to household suffrage also. When we legislated on the subject of the borough franchise for this country in 1867, we adopted a principle and applied a test—namely, ability to maintain and pay rates for a house. Why should not that principle and that test be applied to all parts of the United Kingdom? In the interest of peace and order, and with a view to promote the welfare of Ireland, I appeal to the House to say that she is not to be dealt with as a conquered country, and that she is not to be denied the rights which England has engaged by the Act of Union to give her. I beg, Mr. Speaker to move—

> "That the restricted nature of the Borough Franchise in Ireland as compared with that existing in England and in Scotland is a subject deserving the immediate attention of Parliament, with a view of establishing a fair and just equality of the franchise in the three countries."

Mr. GRAY said, he rose to second the Motion which had just been made by his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Kildare (Mr. Meldon). Fortunately for him (Mr. Gray) his hon. and learned Friend had dealt so completely with the subject that he had left him very little to say upon it. That was the fourth occasion, he thought, upon which he had had the honour of seconding the Motion, and he confessed that it was with some lack of spirit that he did so on the present occasion, for there was something, it appeared to him, a little flat, stale, and unprofitable in having to go over the well-worn arguments again, and in having to impress those who seemed not to wish to be impressed with what to Irish Members was so obvious a truism as the Resolution propounded. That was the sixth time that the Motion had been brought forward in the present Parliament. When it was first brought forward, one of the arguments used by the then Chief Secretary for Ireland was, that it was an inconvenient time to discuss it, inasmuch as a change of the franchise might be held to involve a re-election as a matter of principle. That argument had recently been abandoned in view of the approach of a General Election, and he would seek to impress upon the House the fact, that except the change was made now the argument would be revived in the new Parliament, and a reform, which all Parties in the House were agreed must sooner or later be granted, would again be postponed for a series of years. He would not endeavour to follow his hon. and learned Friend in the figures and statistics which he had so clearly and ably placed before the House. They were well known to every hon. Member who had paid attention to the subject. He had, however, endeavoured in the course of the past year to ascertain what were the arguments, or attempts at arguments, advanced against what appeared to him so small a matter as that involved in the equalization of the franchise in the two Kingdoms. He certainly thought that in the past speeches of the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis) was to be found all that was to be said on the subject. He quite granted that it was natural that the hon. Gentleman should take a strong interest in the subject. One of the most formidable arguments which he had advanced against the proposed change was that it might deprive that House of the services of some Conservative borough Members. Well, he (Mr. Gray) recognized the force of that argument; but he scarcely felt that it was one which should weigh in the estimation of hon. Gentlemen generally against all the arguments that could be advanced by the other side. But they had had advanced by every speaker who had opposed the Motion of his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Kildare, an argument which he (Mr. Gray) was sure would be very familiar to the older Members of the House—the swamping argument! His hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Meldon) had, he thought, dealt with tolerable completeness with that argument. Parliament had disposed of any such objection when it settled the principle of the Reform Act of 1868. They were not then afraid of swamping the old constituencies with new voters, and there was, therefore, no force whatever in the argument that they would swamp the Irish constituencies with new voters, when it was shown that they would not double them in Ireland, and when they had doubled them without any injury, and, as he believed the majority of Members in that House would say, with the greatest possible benefit in England. He really could not see what force there could be in the swamping argument at all, after it had been proved that the change would not be nearly so great in Ireland as it had been in England; and in England the "leap in the dark" had no such dreadful results as some hon. Members opposite then anticipated. But another assertion which had been made in connection with this matter was, that in Ireland there was no demand for the change. The hon. Member for Londonderry brought forward, as a proof of that, the fact that this Motion had been advocated year after year by two county Members. But he (Mr. Gray) could not forget also that, although by accident it so happened to have been placed in their hands for some years, the Irish borough Members had spoken very strongly in its favour. "But," said the hon. Member for Londonderry, "there are no Petitions and no public meetings in its favour. If we except a few professional agitators"—that, he (Mr. Gray) thought, was the expression used—"in and out of the House"—including, he supposed, all the Irish Members who were in favour of the change—"if we except a few professional agitators in and out of the House, and in and out of town councils, there is no indication of public opinion in favour of the change." He (Mr. Gray) quite granted that there were no Petitions—or, at least, very few—but the wonder would be if there were Petitions in favour of it, because what did Petitions to that House indicate? They indicated on the part of the Petitioners that their representations would have some effect in swaying the opinion and the action of those to whom the Petitions were presented. Now, he would ask on what occasion the Petitions of the Irish people, no matter how numerous or influential they might have been, had the slightest effect on the decision of the House? He was not aware of any occasion upon which they had had any such effect; and, as a consequence, the Irish people had totally abandoned Petitions as a means of impressing their views upon the Legislature. He himself had had to do lately with Petitions in reference, not alone to this question, but to others also, and he was always met by this answer, that it was nonsense, and utterly useless to Petition the House of Commons on any subject whatsoever. The House was overwhelmed with Petitions on the Irish University Education Question, which were treated with contempt; but when no Petitions were presented, the House dealt with the subject. Take, again, the question of the Irish Land—would the House deny that the Irish people took an interest in the Land Question? But how many Petitions had been presented on the Land Question both during the present Session and last? The House must deal with the facts of the case, and it must remember that its treatment of Irish Petitions, and of Irish opinion, both as represented inside the House, and as represented by what the hon. Gentleman was pleased to call professional agitators outside, had been one of uniform and studied contempt. ["No, no!"] He repeated that the attitude of the House towards Irish opinion had been one of uniform and studied contempt. He thought that the number of Divisions in which the majority of Irish Members had been defeated by a majority of English Members voting against them in the House now approached to nearly 200, and if that were not evidence of deliberate and studied contempt, he did not know what evidence was. Therefore, it came to this, that really the Irish people were to a considerable degree commencing to despair of anything in the shape of constitutional agitation or of constitutional representation of their opinions in that House. Another of the arguments which had been brought forward against the proposal was, that it would suddenly increase the power of the Catholic Church, and swamp Protestant votes by Catholic votes in Ireland. He thought that at this time of day that was rather an ignoble sort of argument to advance in that House, but he granted that the lower they went down in the franchise in Ireland, the more they would increase the power of Catholic votes. But what the hon. Member for Londonderry deduced from that was, that they would expel from the House of Commons Protestant Representatives. Was there any evidence for that assertion? Did they not find that, with the present restricted franchise, some of the most popular constituencies, which were almost altogether Catholic, returned Protestant Members? What sort of ground, therefore, was there for saying that the lowering of the franchise would shut out Protestant Representatives?

Mr. CHARLES LEWIS said, the hon. Member had mistaken his argument.

Mr. GRAY observed, that later on he should take the opportunity of quoting the exact words used. At present, he understood the hon. Member's argument, and even his words, to be that they would expel from the House Protestant Representatives, and he quoted some declaration made in Ulster, that if this reform was carried out, the entire power would be vested in Catholic electors.

Mr. CHARLES LEWIS: I said Protestants would be so outvoted that they would practically be unrepresented in this House. I did not say that there would not be Protestant Members.

Mr. GRAY: If there was any controversy as to the words, he was bound to accept the hon. Gentleman's assertion, and if the hon. Gentleman had been misrepresented, it was by *Hansard.* If, however, the idea had existed in the minds of any hon. Members, that because the power of Roman Catholics in a constituency would be increased, the effect would be to exclude from the House Protestant Representatives, then he would say that the large number of Protestants who at that moment represented Catholic constituencies should dispel any such idea. The conduct pursued in Catholic constituencies in that respect compared favourably with the fact that there was not, he believed, any Catholic Representative of a Protestant constituency in England. The hon. Member admitted that the condition of the borough representation in Ireland was scandalous; but he had not, so far as he (Mr. Gray) could gather, propounded any method of reform, beyond proposing that the representation of the counties should be increased at the expense of the boroughs. The fact was, that at that moment the county representation in Ireland was larger in proportion than the county representation in England, and the borough representation was proportionately smaller. Therefore, instead of equalizing matters, he would increase the anomaly that at present existed. When they remembered the difference of the rating laws of the two countries, and remembered also that rental in Ireland must be estimated in practice at 50 per cent lower than in England, they would find that, by the present law, they were excluding a class of intelligent men who were not at all of the character described by opponents of this measure. Even the inhabitants of the very poor habitations in the Irish towns were an intelligent class, who took an active interest in public affairs, and there was no reason, except the political reason that it might effect the balance of Parties, for resisting this change. He believed all Parties would agree that the change must eventually come, and the only result of resistance was, that the concession would come from that House too late to give any satisfaction, but early enough to leave a feeling of soreness, whereas if the demand were granted at the outset, no such feeling would exist. The hon. Member for Londonderry had disputed his (Mr. Gray's) account of what he (Mr. Charles Lewis) said in opposing this Resolution last year; but he (Mr. Gray) was now in a position to quote the actual words from *Hansard.* The hon. Member was therein reported to have said—

> "Moreover, it would, in the end, wholly exclude from Parliament all the Representatives of the Protestant religion."—[3 *Hansard*, ccxliii. 1212.]

He appealed to the House, therefore, whether his rendering of the hon. Member's argument had not been correct? He would further ask hon. Members whether this was not a peculiarly appropriate time to throw aside small prejudices which prevented the House from passing this reform, and to concede it with some grace? They were on the eve of a General Election, and it was, therefore, a convenient period. Ireland was very much disturbed and discontented. This was a measure in which no political principle was involved. If they passed it, it would create a general feeling of satisfaction and allay much discontent. It would introduce into the Constitution from outside, and therefore teach the ways of constitutional agitation, to men who were now deliberately shut out, and who therefore felt they had no hope, except by violent means, of attaining their end. It would be truly Conservative action on the part of that House to pass the measure. He believed the majority of hon. Members, if left to their own inclinations, would agree to the Motion; and he repeated the appeal which his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Kildare made to those on whose private convictions political pressure was being brought to bear, to pause before giving a vote injurious to the peace and best interests of the United Kingdom, which would reject a measure calculated to promote both that peace and those interests.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the restricted nature of the Borough Franchise in Ireland as compared with that existing in England and in Scotland is a subject deserving the immediate attention of Parliament, with a view of establishing a fair and just equality of the franchise in the three countries."—(*Mr. Meldon.*)

MR. CHARLES LEWIS, in moving, as an Amendment—"That it is inexpedient to deal with the question of lowering the franchise in Ireland," said, he regretted he must trouble the House on this question for the fourth or fifth time in this Parliament. It was not easy to find anything new to urge in opposing a measure which he had resisted for several years past. He proposed, however, to mention some matters which should induce the House to give greater weight rather than less to the objections usually urged against this proposal. When the hon. and learned Member for Kildare (Mr. Meldon) talked of majorities of only 8 or 13 against his Motion, he would remind him that only last year, Parliament rejected it by a majority of 69, which showed that there was less disposition than in the beginning of the Parliament to look on it with favour. The hon. and learned Member had endeavoured to invoke the Act of Union in favour of his cause, and said it entitled them to equality of representation; but if his (Mr. Charles Lewis's) memory served him rightly, all it did was to give them the right to 100 Members in the Imperial Parliament. It was totally silent in respect to franchise, that being an entirely open question for the Imperial Parliament to settle. Then the hon. and learned Member said that the House would not be dealing out equal justice unless they placed the franchise of the two Kingdoms on an equality; but he (Mr. Charles Lewis) would remind him that for a long time Ireland was treated better in regard to the franchise than England. Up to 1867, the borough franchise and the county franchise were less in Ireland than in England. It had been urged that unless they gave the same franchise, as well as the same laws, to Ireland as to England, they would not be carrying out in spirit or in letter the Act of Union. In fact, they had far more than equal laws and advantages conceded. Well, he believed there was such a thing as National Education in Ireland. Ireland, for nearly 30 years, was in a position of great advantage over England and Scotland by reason of the grants it received from the Imperial Exchequer for National Education. With reference to the Land Question, Ireland was so far from being placed at a disadvantage and inequality, that the House had made a serious inroad in the law of contracts to give concessions to Ireland. And yet, in the recent agitation, it had been stated that that was one of the questions which they looked upon with contempt. What did the Act of Union say in reference to the Irish Church? That Act was upheld as a substantial ground for asking for an extension of the borough franchise, but it had nothing whatever to do with it. It gave a sacred Charter to the Church of Ireland, which had been broken by the deliberate action of the House for the purpose of promoting a feeling of goodwill and order amongst the people of Ireland. The whole history of that country, the whole history of legislation in our lifetime, all went to show that it was unjust to the last degree to say that it was useless to send Petitions to that House. The statement that the Conservative Party was responsible for the disparity which existed between the borough franchises of Ireland and England required a material explanation, for it was only in part true. The line was drawn at £4, with the deliberate acquiescence of both sides of the House, without a Division except on the question raised whether it should be at £4, or over £4; and this arrangement was assented to by the then Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Chichester Fortescue), the Conservative Ministry being at the time in a minority, and living on from day to day on the forbearance of the Opposition. In past Sessions the opposition to this Motion had devolved chiefly upon himself; and he did not hesitate, as a borough Member, to express his views, whatever might be the consequences. It was remarkable that this question was brought forward by county Members, and that the borough Members who supported it consented to play second fiddle. The first great point—a plausible one—they had heard of in the debate was equality of the franchise with that of England and Scotland. That was a term which must not be accepted at the first sound which it conveyed to the ear. But the House should understand what it implied and what it meant. What he argued was, that, considering the quality and character of the franchised and unfranchised classes, the franchise in the three countries was equivalent; and to give electoral power to that poor, miserable, ignorant residuum of the people of Ireland, which even the right hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) had said we did not in England wish to enfranchise, would be going beyond what really existed in England. It was impossible to compare the franchise of the two countries in that way, and he should ask the House to say, by the largest majority that had yet been given against the proposal, that they rejected the Motion on the highest possible grounds and for the gravest reasons. It was a favourite illustration to talk of the Irish occupier coming over to Liverpool and obtaining a vote; but he would not find a £4 house in Liverpool, and would have to pay a rental of £7, £8, or £9. It was impossible to compare things which differed so essentially. In England, according to the last statistics, nine-tenths of the occupiers were rated over £4; but in Ireland not one-half. In other words, only one-tenth of the rated occupiers in boroughs in England were rated under £4, while in Ireland they were more than one-half. It was true there had been a liberal addition to the borough franchise in England, and suffrage was given to a class that was low relatively to the highest; but still it was not given to the very lowest class in the community. Further, in Ireland, one-half of those under £4 were rated under £2, and, of course, these were the most dependent and the most ignorant of the people. That was the class to whom they proposed to hand over the representation of Ireland. In England and Scotland they did not give it to the lowest class; yet the effect of the hon. and learned Gentleman's proposal here would be to hand it over to the poorest, most dependent, and most ignorant portion of the community, and the class most likely to be led by agitators and demagogues. The singular fact that this Motion was not strenuously supported by the borough Members of Ireland was accounted for by the state of the borough representation in Ireland. It would be impossible to deal at all with that subject without effecting an entire reformation in the whole system of the representation of Ireland. With an aggregate population of 900,000, the boroughs had 37 Members, excluding the disfranchised boroughs of Cashel and Sligo. The counties, with a population of 4,500,000, had only 64 Members. Therefore, the counties had five times the population, with nothing like twice the number of Members. That exhibited a state of things which did not recommend an extension of the borough franchise, and it was the reason why such strenuous efforts were made, not by the constituencies, but by Irish Members, by hook or by crook, to endow a small number of Irish Members with constituencies which they could not obtain under any reasonable extension of the franchise. Fifteen small boroughs with a population of 91,000, and with 4,500 electors, had one-seventh of the entire representation of Ireland, though only one-sixtieth of its population. That was the reason why the House could not consent to touch the question of borough or county representation, except for the purpose of making an entire re-distribution, which he hoped would be accompanied with a large representation of minorities. It was said that a population of 900,000 had only 53,000 electors, and that something must be wrong because the same population in England would have double the number of electors; but the anomaly arose from the fact that there were in the South and West of Ireland a number of wretched little boroughs where poverty was so rife that people lived in hovels and huts rated at from 5*s*. to 15*s*. per year. The proportion of electors to population was, in Tralee 1 in 30, in Dungarvan 1 in 27, in Wexford 1 in 27, in Carlow 1 in 26, and in 21 boroughs in three of the Provinces—Ulster being excluded—the average was 1 in 21½. There were in these places streets of mud huts destitute of the commonest conveniences, the occupiers of which had no social status, and ought not to have the franchise. He now came to the despised Province of Ulster, which gave occasion the other evening to the pleasant sneer of the Home Rule Leader on the other side. In Belfast 1 in every 9 of the population was an elector—almost as high as in England; for while in the whole of the English borough constituencies 1 in 8 was the proportion of electors to population, in Belfast—of which every Ulster man should be proud—the proportion was 1 in 9. What was it in Carrickfergus? It was 1 in 7. What in Derry? One in 12. The average of the whole of the boroughs in Ulster was 1 in 12 of the population, no unfavourable comparison to the state of things in England. In Devonport, the proportion was only 1 in 17; in Marylebone, 1 in 14; in Finsbury, 1 in 11; in Chelsea, 1 in 10; so that if they were to have this kind of comparison between population and electors, these prosperous little towns in Ulster would bear advantageous comparison with some of the foremost constituencies in the United Kingdom. The real cause of this destitution—if he might so describe it—of electors in Ireland was that, if they took the line of £4, those below it were of the poorest, most ignorant, and most dependent condition, whose enfranchisement would drag down the constituency to the low level of Tralee, Carlow, and other such places. The hon. Member for Tipperary (Mr. Gray) knew very well he could not account in any legitimate way for the entire absence of evidence that the electoral class in Ireland was in favour of the proposed change, and he elicited a cheer from the hon. and learned Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt) and the right hon. Member for Birmingham, when he said that the House had treated with contempt the Petitions of the Irish people. Had the feeling of the people of Ireland in favour of the Sunday Closing Bill been treated with contempt? Had any other evidence been given of popular feeling in favour of this Motion; had any meeting been held in Dublin, in Phœnix Park, in Belfast, Cork, Limerick, or Galway; had there even been a meeting of any little conclave in the back room of a public-house in favour of the Bill? Why, last year, although stimulated by the taunts which he (Mr. Charles Lewis) had thrown across the House year after year, they could only present 26 Petitions, and how many of those were from boroughs? Just four of the smallest of them had been induced to send up Petitions. He represented a constituency where Parties were very evenly divided. The Liberal paper in that city had published a list of his delinquencies; but, although he had been the most prominent and most abused opponent of the measure, it did not venture to say one word of the offence he had committed in that respect. The city of Derry contained a wealthy, intelligent, highly-educated, and most respectable Liberal Party, and if they had felt that the interests of the State, of Party, or good government required such a change, they would undoubtedly have sent a Petition in support of the the Motion. The Bill was not wanted. Let the hon. Members for Queen's County and other places, who were to be opposed at the next Election by the supporters and followers of the hon. Member for Meath, now in America, tell what it meant. It meant that, bad as was the influence to which on many questions the constituencies of Ireland in some counties and boroughs were amenable, it would be ten times worse if they enfranchised that residuum which they were invited to take to their arms. They could not deal with this question alone. The hon. Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) had his hardy annual Motion on the Paper for household franchise in the counties, and they must remember the noble Marquess opposite (the Marquess of Hartington) had surrendered what he had held so long—his resistance to that Motion, which had now become a part of the programme of the Liberal Party. No doubt, two Members of the late Cabinet—the right hon. Member for the City of London (Mr. Goschen) and the right hon. Member for the University of London (Mr. Lowe)—refused to surrender their convictions upon that question; but the Liberal

Party were committed to it. The question was not one to be dealt with piecemeal. It was necessary the House should hold its hand, for if they agreed to the present proposal they would find themselves face to face with a proposal to give to the counties of Ireland household suffrage. So they would enfranchise the cottier on the Donegal mountains, of whom the newspapers had recently given such dismal pictures. He would now go to another point. Could it be said that the people of Ireland were not represented? It was said the Home Rulers expected to come back from the next Election 80 strong. Would not hon. Gentlemen opposite be satisfied that the people of Ireland were sufficiently represented if they returned 80 Home Rule Members to that House? No, the fact was, they wanted to make a clean sweep of the Conservative Members, and himself as one of them, who might be one of the very few who would be found, even under the present franchise, on those benches after the next General Election. Not only was there a lack of evidence, however, that there was any demand for an extension of the franchise, but it was clear that there was not the slightest interest felt in the proposal by the unenfranchised classes; the interest was made for them—

"Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not
Who would be free themselves must strike the blow."

But the hereditary bondsmen in this case would not strike the blow. And here there was a far more serious question. What was the evidence on which the House could act, as to the quality of the constituency whom it was asked to enfranchise? If it were proved that the people to be enfranchised were sufficiently educated, that they were intelligent, that they were free, as much as men could be, from obnoxious influence—the influence of revolutionary agitators, mere demagogues, men who traded in politics, and loved revolution because it led to disorder, in the midst of which they might be elevated upon a pinnacle, where they might be admired by some—something might be said for the proposal. But take the condition of Ireland during the last six months, and what would be the class enfranchised under this Motion and the County Franchise Bill which the hon. Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) intended to bring forward? A poor widow dared to pay her rent. She was taken out of her house and half beaten to death. Two brothers had the daring to take a vacant farm. In the middle of the night they were half murdered. A process server was performing his duties. He was surrounded by a mob of 300 or 400, and had to escape with his life. It was necessary in certain districts to defy the Court of Sessions. The people had been advised that if they could prevent processes from being served by a certain day the Court would not have jurisdiction. Well, the law was set at defiance, and the people succeeded in preventing a single process being served. In other words, in the South and West of Ireland the law of the land was set aside and mob law substituted. Well, were persons who thus showed themselves unworthy of the franchise to be put on the same level as those who obeyed the law? If he was asked what disclosed the tendencies of a people, he would say go to its literature. There were, at least, five or six newspapers in Ireland which had the greatest circulation and popularity among the lowest orders. One of them would not be entirely unknown to the hon. and learned Member opposite (Mr. Sullivan), who knew something about it now, and more a few years ago—he meant *The Nation.* What could be the loyalty of a people to whom such a ballad as this was submitted as legitimate food for meditation day and night? This was the refrain—

"Hurrah for our Zulu foe."

And that at a time when English and Irish soldiers were fighting together the battles of old England in South Africa. This was the sort of meat on which the Irish people to be enfranchised were fed—

"Hurrah for our Zulu foe,
For their solid and deep array,
For their whelming crescent's close,
And the whizzing assegai."

This was the literary garbage upon which the uneducated constituency was to feed. He would now read a verse, the impiety of which was only equalled by its audacity and ferocity—

"May the God they do not know
Be still their steadfast aid,
Direct each nervous blow
And point each gleaming blade.
And when they come forth again,

The robbers' raid to withstand,
Be a sword and shield to the men
Who fight for their native land.
But come what must or may,
They have done their manly part."

Now let the House mark what followed—

"And Isandula's fray
Hath warmed each true man's heart."

What a flood of light did that wretched production, circulated far and wide in thousands among the people, throw on the degraded condition to which these agitators were trying to lead the Irish people. He would read the last refrain—

"Then hurrah for the Zulu King,
Hurrah for his warriors brave,"

(Nothing for the poor Irishmen or Englishmen who were fighting)—

"And soon may their shouts of victory ring
Over Tugela's turbid wave."

The Nation also of last Saturday contained an article headed "A Murderous Policy," from which he would read three sentences. They were as follows:—

"The senior Member for Louth gave expression to the feeling of the mass of the people of Ireland, when he spoke of the 'murderous policy' of the Government. That policy remains one of a murderous character. It has so far tended to the killing by starvation of hundreds of thousands of Irish men, women, and children; and as to the future, it is calculated simply to enrich the landlords at the cost of the impoverished tenants."

Now, what was the responsibility of men who wrote such language as that? What was the responsibility of this House, if—in the face of such evidence of the revolutionary feeling, the traitorous suggestion, the spirit of deep-laid sedition which was preached from the pulpits of the Press from week to week—it were to go forward in the direction indicated in the Motion? This language was actually written at a time when the House had under its consideration a measure for the relief of Irish distress, to hasten forward which the progress of several other necessary steps were delayed, but which was impeded by the very men who fathered such stuff. He was sorry to have such things to bring forward; but when the House was asked to grant such a measure as hon. Gentlemen opposite demanded, he would say that they would be madmen if they were to enfranchise hundreds and thousands of men subject to such influences. What he ventured to say was this—that there was a responsibility which rested upon that House and the Government; but it was a responsibility of a totally different character from that alleged on the other side. The responsibility which rested upon the House, and more especially upon the Government, was, after they had relieved the distress, to render impossible for the future such offences as had been perpetrated under the auspices of the hon. Member for Meath during the last few months. When they considered what Parliament had had to suffer from some few of the Members of the Irish Party, and how the authority both of the House and of the Speaker had been defied, they might ask themselves what sort of degeneracy in the representation of Ireland would be the result if they extended the suffrage to classes of men who were amenable to such influences as they had submitted to for some months past? What they had to fear might be gathered from a speech that had come to them from the other side of the Atlantic, in which the whole Home Rule organization had been pronounced a humbug, and the orator had promised to set things right on his return. Foreign nations had been wont to envy the dignity of the House, and had admired its constitution, its history, its antiquity, its oratory, and the certainty at any period of finding competent statesmen among its Members; but now for the last year or two they had looked on amazed at the course of operations both in and out of the House. For his own part, he would join any Party that would restore the shattered dignity of Parliament, and replace the House on its old pinnacle of fame. With regard to another matter, to which he might be permitted to allude for a moment, it would be remembered that the wish of Job was that his enemy had written a book. His own desire was even more moderate, and he only wished that his adversary would continue to write letters. The noble Marquess (the Marquess of Hartington) during the Liverpool Election had written one, on which, had he (Mr. Charles Lewis) wanted a motto, he would have inscribed "Letting I dare not wait upon I would." The conclusion he had formed respecting that letter was that the noble Marquess had been an unwilling operator, and that he had probably been prompted to write it by one of the chief advisers of his Party, and that in it were to be detected marks of the handiwork of the hon. and learned Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt). The voice, in fact, was the voice of Jacob, but the hand was the hand of Esau. It was written, and the noble Marquess got into difficulty about it, and in order to get himself out of it the hon. and learned Member for Oxford went down to Liverpool post-haste and addressed the Liverpool Reform Club. It was whispered in the Lobby that he came back jubilant with hopes of victory, with what result really they all knew. The noble Marquess, the other night, had very vigorously defended himself against attacks based upon that letter by a *tu quoque* argument as to the appointment of the hon. and gallant Member for Sligo (Colonel King-Harman). That was all very well; but what was Home Rule a year or two ago, and what was it now? A year or two ago Home Rule was a comparatively harmless and respectable thing under the management of a very great favourite of the House (Mr. Butt), who imparted to it his own respectability. But now, under its present leadership, it was a thing which had almost paralyzed the action of Parliament. The Home Rule Party had taken such steps under the leadership of the hon. Member for Meath as had agitated whole counties, endeavouring to delude the unfortunate people, and inciting them by speeches to break the law and rise *en masse*.

Mr. SULLIVAN asked if the hon. Member was in Order in accusing an hon. Member of inciting the people to break the law?

Mr. SPEAKER said, he did not understand that the hon. Member was alluding to any particular Member of the House. [*Cries of* "Yes, he did."]

Mr. SULLIVAN: He said the hon. Member for Meath.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. Member referred to the hon. Member for Meath he was out of Order.

Mr. CHARLES LEWIS replied, that he was quite ready to bow to the Chair; but the House and country would well know what he meant. He was referring to Home Rule, and he had remarked that a year or two ago it was a harmless snake; but now it had become a poisonous serpent. The hiss and rattle which heralded its approach, and the slimy trail it left behind, made it odious and hateful in the sight of everyone who had the welfare of the country at heart. He did not see the right hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) in his place; but he would have liked to ask him what he thought the American people would say to a Motion to inquire into the maintenance of the Union between the North and the South? If in the American Senate any man suggested any such thing he would be regarded as seditious. He imagined that they would not allow such a subject to be debated. It was surely a most serious thing—he cared not which Party was affected by the remark — to play with the Home Rule agitation under its present aspect. What Ireland wanted was not a Borough Franchise Bill, but something wholly different—peace from agitation, contentment for the people, an orderly disposition to obey the law, encouragement for capital to settle in the country, and for landlords to reside there. It wanted a tonic which could be administered by a wise and skilful physician who desired to remedy the evils of the body politic, which, however severe they might be, were not past relief. The last thing it required in a crisis like that through which it had recently gone was an instrument like that which this Motion would place in the hands of reckless agitators for the purpose of doing an injury to the best interests of the State.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "it is inexpedient to deal with the question of lowering the franchise in Ireland," — (*Mr. Charles Lewis,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. JUSTIN M'CARTHY said, that he entirely agreed with the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis) in the concluding sentence of his speech, that Ireland did want peace from agitation—that she wanted sound legislation, and measures which would foster the employment of capital. But she never would have peace until a better system of legislation was introduced for the government of her people. The hon. Member for Londonderry seemed to want to play the same part as that enacted by the right hon. Member for the University of London (Mr. Lowe) in the Reform debates of 1866; but some of the necessary qualities were absent. With regard to the verses that the hon. Member had quoted from a Dublin newspaper, some allowance was to be made for poetic licence, though there undoubtedly existed a certain amount of discontent in Ireland that found vent in strong language, prose as well as poetry. It was to be remembered, too, that when England was engaged in her great struggle with France there were Englishmen, Lord Byron among the number, who openly expressed their sympathy with the enemy of their country. The hon. Member for Londonderry, at the beginning of his speech, assumed an heroic and almost a sublime attitude as the opponent of this proposal. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman might be conscious of an early close awaiting his political career. Allusion had been made to the indifference with which the Irish borough franchise was rushed through Parliament in the year after the passing of the English Reform Act. That, he was afraid, was perfectly true; but whatever arrangement the present Lord Carlingford might have entered into with the other side of the House, he believed the people of Ireland were ignorant of any movement his Lordship might have made. The Irish Reform Bill had the misfortune to come after the great wave of excitement which passed the Reform Bill for England. It was now well known that the Government had prepared two Bills for England ready for the occasion. One was a Reform Bill of the first class, and the other an inferior and a cheaper article of the second class. The Government originally intended to bring forward the first-class Bill in the first instance; but some of their Colleagues objected to so comprehensive a measure, and, consequently, a famous meeting was held, at which, when it became known that some Members of the Cabinet had resolved to resign rather than accept this comprehensive Bill, the question arose, "What ought to be done next?" Only 10 minutes remained to come to a resolution, and then the Prime Minister produced the second-class cheap Reform Bill, as if that alone had been the result of all the labours of the Government. When, however, this measure was introduced, the House received it so coldly that, after throwing over two of his Colleagues, the present Prime Minister brought forward the first-class Reform Bill, and even that was altered in every one of its principal points as the discussion proceeded. The Government ended by adopting the system of household suffrage pure and simple in the boroughs; and at last the present Prime Minister turned round, and proclaimed that he had all along been in favour of that, and of nothing else, and that in his previous struggles against Parliamentary Reform he had only been educating his Party. If the Irish Members had been assisted by the English Liberals, they would, doubtless, have been able to force on the Government a thorough measure of Reform for Ireland. But the English people had become weary of the subject of Reform, and something hardly worthy of the name of a Reform Bill for Ireland was shuffled somehow through Parliament, and that country was informed—"You have your measure of Reform; go and be happy." The hon. Member for Londonderry failed to adduce any valid reason why there should be a difference between England and Ireland in regard to the borough franchise. Many hon. Members were strongly in favour of the English Bill, because it was based on the sure and firm ground of household suffrage; and that was said to be an intelligible and a constitutional English measure. Such being the case, what was the reason why the same trust should not be reposed in Ireland, and why there should not be the same system for the boroughs there as for the boroughs here? One reason given by the hon. Member for Londonderry was that the lowering of the borough franchise to household suffrage would admit so many of the Irish people that it would be highly improper for the House of Commons to assent to such a proposal. The hon. Member had spoken of "social status," and talked of certain "wretched little boroughs" in Ireland as an argument against extending the franchise. "Social status" was a very elastic expression—a matter of comparison altogether. There had been a time, not many generations ago, when Reform Bills in this country were objected to on precisely the same grounds. The persons deprived of social status were then the great English middle classes, who now made up the bulk alike of the voters and the Members of Parliament. In 1867 and 1868 the persons deprived of social status came to mean the artizan classes in the great English towns. There had been at that time the same effort to associate crime with poverty. One would have thought the result of the reforms of that time would have been to break down this idea, and to show that a man might live in a very humble house and pay a very small rent, and yet be a respectable person, who could fairly be intrusted to do his duty in the electoral system. This was the principle which they invoked for Ireland. Ireland was a much poorer country than England, and a low rent there represented something much more considerable, both absolutely and in proportion to the means of the occupier, than it did in England. The hon. Member seemed to think that hon. Members on that side of the House had a great contempt for the Northern Provinces of Ireland. He spoke of "despised Belfast," and in some mysterious way appeared to make that an argument against lowering the borough franchise. For his own part, he (Mr. Justin M'Carthy) had never heard any Irish Member who spoke contemptuously of Belfast or who was not very proud of its great commercial success and its backbone of manly ability. He would go further and say, such was his affection for the North of Ireland, that even after to-night's performance he did not despise Londonderry. The hon. Member had gone on to speak of demagogues and anarchy in a way which recalled to his mind the Reform agitation of 1860 and of 1867-8. He well remembered hearing the same argument put with much greater force and eloquence by the late Lord Lytton, who affirmed that poverty and passion went together and made a man open to the influence of demagogues. The results of the measures of that date had hardly justified the predictions which had been made. There was but one way of disarming the demagogue, and that was to get the respectable, intelligent, and educated masses of the people on your side and draw them away from the demagogue. There could not be a greater or more injurious fallacy than to suppose that the more you oppressed a population and kept them from what they thought their rights the more you excluded demagogues. It had been contended in favour of Reform in England that the one safe and certain basis for the suffrage in boroughs was the limit of the household; that the possession of any kind of roof-tree made a man really a citizen, and not an outcast. They waited to hear any reason to show that the same system should not be allowed to prevail in Ireland. They had heard a great deal to-night about the influence of one particular hon. Member who had had the good fortune to be mentioned very often in Parliament this Session. The House of Commons always had its pet aversions. There was always some particular so-called demagogue who was pointed to as a reason why popular reform should be denied. The late Daniel O'Connell had held that position in one generation in the English House of Commons. He could remember well that at another time the pet aversion of the Party opposite was the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright). It was said at one time that if a Conservative nurse wanted to frighten a disobedient child she threatened to give him to the right hon. Member for Birmingham. At the present moment they seemed to have selected the hon. Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell) as this type of demagogue. Every word he had ever said, and a great number of words he had never said, were brought up again and again and given as an unanswerable reason why reform should be allowed to go no further in Ireland. But if Ireland really were in such a condition of terrible social convulsion and thirst for revolution and anarchy as the hon. Member for Londonderry supposed, would it be kept quiet by the mere exclusion of a few men below the £4 limit? They had heard a great deal to-night about the happy days when the Home Rule Party was a respectable Party. Its respectability had ceased, it seemed, about a year ago, and since that time the terrible game of obstruction had been played by the hon. Member for Meath. But this game of obstruction began a great deal more than a year ago. Several years ago, when the Home Rule Party was still respectable, some such disturbances had occurred. Nor was this portentous device the invention of the hon. Member for Meath. Long ago, before the hon. Member for Meath was born, it was recognized as a legitimate means of opposing legislation by very leading statesmen. For example, in discussing the possibility of a stringent law being passed against Ireland, a very eminent person—a statesman not without authority even for the Conservative Party—had said—

> "The experience the Conservative Party had about the Irish Arms Bill last year must have shown them that a compact body of opponents, though few in number, may, by debating every sentence and word of a Bill, and by dividing after every debate, so obstruct the progress of a Bill through Parliament, that a whole Session may be scarcely long enough for carrying through one measure. Of course," continued this eminent statesman, "the Irish Members on our side, and all the English and Scotch Radicals, would sit from morn till eve and from eve till dewy morn to prevent any more stringent law being enacted."

Those were the words of Lord Palmerston in 1844, as given in his "Life" by Mr. Evelyn Ashley. But the English Constitution and the Parliamentary system of England succeeded in holding their way even despite the obstruction referred to by Lord Palmerston; and he (Mr. Justin M'Carthy) had no doubt they would survive even what might take place at the present time. But the extract he had cited showed that the practice of obstructing obnoxious measures had always existed, more or less, and its existence now formed no conceivable argument for refusing the franchise to a people. He hoped that House would not be led away by the figures, by the invectives, or by the eloquence of the hon. Member for Londonderry, but that it would remove a manifest inequality and injustice by making the law of England and the law of Ireland the same.

MR. M. BROOKS, said, that the subject brought forward by the hon. and learned Member for Kildare (Mr. Meldon) was one of those inequalities existing in the law which imperatively demanded a remedy.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present. House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

MR. M. BROOKS, resuming, said, the question raised by the hon. and learned Member referred to the inequality of the law in relation to the borough franchise in the Three Kingdoms. He did not propose to refer to any of the figures which had been mentioned previously in the House in connection with the debates on the subject; but he would address himself to what appeared to him to be the results in Ireland of that inequality, and of the feeling of injustice from which the people suffered in consequence of its existence. It seemed to him that the Imperial Parliament, in dealing with the Irish people, acted contrary to the injuction, "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you," and any such neglect of that injunction invariably, in public affairs as in private affairs, led to disaffection, and eventually to disaster. In Ireland the inequality of the law on this subject had produced an amount of discontent which they all deplored. No one in the House regretted more than he did the unhappiness which prevailed amongst Irish people, and which was a consequence of the sense of injustice from which they had suffered. It was believed by the great majority of that people that the English and Scotch Members—that Members of the dominant class who sat on either side of the Gangway, proceeded upon

> "The good old rule, the simple plan,
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can."

There could be no doubt that so long as the present inequality in this matter of the franchise existed, so long would there be the agitation which now prevailed upon the subject. The hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis), among the many other bold things he had told them, said that there was no feeling or desire on the part of the Irish people on this question. He (Mr. M. Brooks) did not know anyone who ought to be better acquainted with the feelings on the matter of those who were sent forward by Local Governing Bodies than he himself, and he could state with confidence that there was a very general call for remedying the grievance complained of. It was perfectly true that those Local Bodies did not petition. There was a belief that Petitions coming up to the House were simply committed to the waste-paper basket, and were never exhumed for any practical purpose; and, therefore, it was not to be considered a neglect on the part of the ratepayers or on the part of the persons whom they asked to serve them in the Local Governing Bodies that Petitions had not been more generally presented. The hon. Member for Londonderry had been good enough to say that the laws existing in the Three Kingdoms were equal, and, amongst other things, the hon. Gentleman instanced the system of education which had prevailed in Ireland for so many years. That allegation on the part of the hon. Member displayed a courage, a boldness, and a want of information which was very remarkable. In every district, town, village, and hamlet in England there was a public school, where the teaching was in accord with the feelings of the people, where the regulating board was sent forward by the ratepayers, and where the consciences and feelings of the people were respected. In Ireland a completely different state of things existed. The consciences of the people might not be violated; but they were strained to an extent which was inconsistent with happiness and contentment. To declare in the House, at that time of day, that the Irish people were governed according to Irish ideas in the matter of education was, at all events, an oversight, which no one, perhaps, but the hon. Member for Londonderry would have ventured to indicate. The hon. Gentleman had also spoken of the miserable cottiers on the mountain side of Donegal who were endeavouring to obtain a scanty subsistence, and had said that were the Motion of the hon. and learned Member for Kildare to become law, and be carried into effect, those poor people would not do credit to the electoral roll. How was it, he (Mr. M. Brooks) asked, that they were dissatisfied? It was simply because they had not that which the hon. Member for Londonderry would deny them. He had a sincere conviction that if the franchise were largely extended in Ireland it would be accompanied by better citizenship than now prevailed, that great happiness would ensue, that the present sense of serfdom would disappear, and that there would be much less cause for complaint on the part of those who now lamented the unhappy condition of the country. The rentals in Ireland of all kinds were cheaper than in England; but the Government valuation of a dwelling-house was not a fair test of the value of the house. It was system rather promoted by the Government that land should be valued at two-thirds, and tenements at about half of the letting value. Therefore, the argument of the hon. Member for Londonderry, based on the existence of equality as between England and Ireland, was fallacious—much of the discontent prevailing in Ireland was owing to the inequality of the law. He was a supporter of law and order, and as good a subject to the Queen as anyone in that House; and, therefore, he felt it to be incumbent on him to do the utmost in his power to remedy the inequality of the law, and thus to promote the progress of the Irish people.

Mr. O'CLERY supported the Motion on the ground mainly that it would, if passed, put the voting power of the Irish people somewhat on a level with that of the voters in England and Scotland. In a former speech of the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis) on the subject, the hon. Member then said the demand ought not to be granted, because there was no interest felt in it in Ireland, and that the efforts of the Home Rule Party to excite the people on the matter had utterly failed. Now, he had changed his tactics, and he said that because of the agitation in Ireland the question ought not to be discussed. It was in this inconsistent way that Irish questions had been time after time dealt with in the House. But in every case the result was the same—the wishes of the Irish people must not be gratified. If the Resolution were given effect to, the voting power of fully 29 boroughs in Ireland would be practically doubled. In face of the household suffrage which England herself enjoyed, it could not be said that Ireland was fairly represented, so long as 29 boroughs were compelled to lose half their voting power. The hon. Member for Londonderry feared that a larger number of Members would be sent to the House to put forward the reasonable demand for the restoration of the Irish Parliament. Now, one of two things must be faced. Either Ireland was content with her present position under the English Parliament, or she was absolutely discontented with it, and would, if the franchise were enlarged, make her voice heard more loudly, and would show that she was in earnest in her demand for the restoration of her ancient Parliament. If the

House would make the admission that its 80 years of rule over Ireland had been 80 years of failure, he could understand the opposition to the present Resolution. He denied that the demand now made was a revolutionary one, because, although it had been made and persisted in ever since the Union, it had no connection with any proposal made for the purpose of procuring a dissolution of the Union between Great Britain and Ireland; and all who had observed the patience of the Irish people under their sufferings must allow that they were worthy of the franchise. The English would not have behaved so patiently, for an Englishman would fight for his belly. The attention of the Continent was now directed to Irish affairs, and English views with respect to the Government of Ireland would no longer be accepted on the Continent.

MR. K. T. DIGBY said, if he could believe the dismal picture of the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis), he would support the Motion; but he thought that if they trusted the people with the responsibility of a vote, those people, guided very much by the influence of the clergy, would exercise their rights in no revolutionary way, but quite the contrary. No doubt, their spirit was thoroughly and entirely national; but he did not think the people would be led away by wild theories. The most dangerous men in Ireland were those with little education, who emancipated themselves from religious influence, not those who had a religious hope and faith. Therefore it was that he supported the Motion, without any feeling of distrust whatever, hoping that his country might be saved from revolution and agitation, and that the hands of the moderate Party might be strengthened. The arguments against the Resolution were the same as those which were used against the extension of the English franchise, and they were thrashed out when they were brought forward on that occasion. He thought the House ought to be guided by the voice of the Irish Members, who almost universally declared that the passing of this Resolution would be no blow to the Empire, and that nobody who voted for it would afterwards regret having done so.

MR. GILES denied that there was any question of justice to Ireland which required the House to agree to the Motion. The householders to whom it was proposed to give the suffrage were by no means equal in status and education to the householders of this country. They were, in fact, the residuum whom few would desire to intrust with votes. He denied that Ireland was treated with any unfairness in respect of her representation. According to the population in England and Wales, there was one Member to every 47,000 persons, in Ireland one to every 53,000, and in Scotland one to every 56,000. Those figures showed that Ireland was not in this respect suffering from any essential injustice. But they were told that the country was anxious to get rid of a Conservative Government; and the hon. and learned Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt) concluded one of his numerous speeches in the Recess by saying that "the first day of the new Parliament would be the last day of the present Government," which was equivalent to saying that the present House of Commons did not represent the electors of the United Kingdom. The election for Liverpool, and more closely recent that for Southwark, was the answer to that allegation. If, however, the present House of Commons did not represent the general body of electors, much less did the Home Rulers represent the general body of electors of Ireland. He found, it was true, that of 103 Irish Members there were 58 who were Home Rulers; but when the votes were scrutinized it appeared that out of 234,000 voters, 66,000 voted for Home Rulers, and 6,000 against Conservative and Liberal Members, making a total of only 72,000 Home Rule voters; so that less than one-third of the electoral power of Ireland represented Home Rule. Were the other two-thirds to be silenced? Were they to be set aside altogether by this minority of one-third? He would suggest to the Home Rulers in the House to moderate their language. The House was always ready to listen to any proposition to do justice to Ireland; but it would not submit to be intimidated or threatened.

MR. WADDY remarked, that he considered there was an anxious desire in the House to do justice to Ireland; but, unfortunately, many of its Members had mixed up "Home Rule" and other irrelevant questions with the debate on franchise. The majority of hon. Members in that House represented those who had to legislate for the Sister Country, which appeared to think it was unequally represented in Parliament in regard to numbers, and that it was not sufficiently represented by those who enjoyed the franchise. But the Irish Members who had supported the Motion did not say, "Give us a larger share in the representation." They said, "Make our share in the representation the same as your own." He (Mr. Waddy) thought it desirable that those who did not believe in Home Rule should distinctly understand the position they took up in this matter. The House had heard the opinions and views that night of several Members from the Sister Isle, who were credited with faith in the system of Home Rule. He did not wish to define what that system was; but because he believed, in common with a large majority of the House, that Home Rule would be a profound misfortune for the Sister Country, he would earnestly entreat the House to listen with consideration and care to the claim which was being now made for Ireland. It was because he believed the mere fact that the House deemed Home Rule to Ireland to be unnecessary, and that it would be illogical to grant what was now claimed, that he appealed to the House that night to consider the position. He was not a bit in love with Home Rule. The manner of its birth had not recommended it to his judgment. If they were dealing with the case of a Colony the arguments which had been used would be exceedingly different; but they were dealing with Ireland, which was called the Sister Country, and as such it was supposed to be judged, and governed, and managed on the principle of equality. If it was a Sister Country, he could not understand in what respect there was to be a distinction. Not one single argument, so far as he knew, had been based upon principle, but a great many had been based upon passion. The whole of the speech of the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis) appeared to him to be a diatribe against Home Rule; but in this debate they had nothing whatever to do with Home Rule. They should discuss this matter of the franchise on its own merits. The speech of the hon. Member for Londonderry was vigorous, but it was not logical. It was also remarkable for want of good taste. Was it true that in Ireland the more they multiplied the number of their voters the worse they got in the character of the Representatives they sent? It also appeared that the people were getting more Conservative, and from remarks made by the hon. Member for Londonderry it would appear that the halcyon days were coming when Home Rule would die out, and nearly all the Representatives sent to Parliament would be Conservatives. It had been said there was no fixity of tenure in Ireland, and that people did not live long enough in one place. The same was said respecting this country years ago, and he was not surprised that it was said of Ireland, for unless things greatly improved in that country in regard to the Land Question, he should not consider it a very desirable place to live in for any length of time, especially in one place. Hon. Members opposite often taunted the Irish Members below the Gangway with being disloyal and traitorous. Was it not fair, then, to ask, "If the present constituencies have such evil results, could their action really be worse?" There was no one, he thought, in the House who would deny that in times gone by our rule of Ireland had been of a character which it would be very difficult for us to justify, and they were not now likely to promote peace, and happiness, and harmony, by using the kind of language which had been heard that night. One hon. Gentleman had characterized the policy which had been pursued as that of the serpent, and other strong words had been used. Such speeches were printed and published in Ireland, and he wished to know whether such language was the language which should be used in discussing a matter which should especially be robbed of anything like passion and anger? If it was true, as he believed it was, that there had been too much room for agitation in days gone by, then he would urge those who were now trying to stir up the people to be cautious, and also to remember that they could not do much mischief, unless there was wrong to be redressed, for fire would not burn without fuel. If there were legislative grievances, and the Irish people had a right to claim equality with the English, Scotch, and Welsh in this matter of the franchise, he would say—did it not occur to their friends that they would do more good by calling hon. Members who were opposed to them fewer hard names? Let them give equality in this as in other respects, and if they did so, the cause for the wrath which had been exhibited that night would die away.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY said, that the first ground on which the Motion was advocated was that of equality, and when one used that word it was almost unnecessary to follow it up with argument. Ireland was united to England by the Act of Union, and was supposed to enjoy a common Constitution. Why, then, should not the people of Ireland enjoy the same means of expressing their views under that Constitution that the people of England and Scotland enjoyed? He appealed to hon. Gentlemen opposite to look back at the past history of Ireland, think of all that Ireland had undergone in past centuries, of rights refused for generations—even unto the time in which they lived, and finally conceded, and now admitted to have been most reasonably conceded. Was it fair dealing with people on whom the refusal of these rights had left such painful memories to refuse them their present demand for perfect equality in the franchise? He endeavoured never to refer to these past events in that House in tones of bitterness and exasperation, but for the purpose of inducing English Members, moved by their painful memories, to come forward and try to displace the recollection of them by introducing perfect equality. Its concession, he maintained, would be an earnest of goodwill on the part of this country to Ireland. It was said that Ireland was not loyal. He did not like extreme confessions of loyalty, and he had an equal dislike to expressions of disloyalty, which meant nothing practical, and which could only create exasperation; but the feeling of loyalty in Ireland was like the mercury in a thermometer, it went up and down according as a spirit of sympathy and kindness was displayed by the people of England towards the people of Ireland. If the House made this concession of equality in the matter of franchise, undoubtedly loyalty would go up, for it had always gone up when a concession was made in a fair spirit. If they refused it, loyalty would not grow by their refusal, and a tendency to disloyalty would be promoted. Something had been said about cheers for the Zulus having been given at public meetings in Ireland. Well, no one could hear them without regret; but what had occurred on these occasions was that some silly boy, or thoughtless man, who perhaps had taken too much drink, raised that cry. He had never heard a cheer in response to it. No one who thought seriously on the subject would think of raising that as an argument against granting this concession of equality of the franchise. A great deal had been said on the subject of Home Rule. The question of the franchise, as brought before the House, had no bearing whatever on the question of Home Rule. If it had any relation to Home Rule, it was this—that it would prepare the people for the acceptance of a wise and just measure of self-government, such as, on consideration, very few practical men in that House would object to. There was another bearing which it might be fairly said Home Rule had on the subject. Irish Members came to that House in 1874 demanding Home Rule. They were told that they would not get it; but that any fair demands that could be made for the concession of equal rights with Englishmen and Scotchmen within the Constitution as it was at present framed would be conceded. Well, here was one of the demands, and no man could say that it transcended the limits of equality. Surely if hon. Gentlemen on the one side of the House or the other wanted to strengthen their arguments against Home Rule, whatever the value of those arguments might ultimately prove to be, they must make those concessions of equality demanded within the limits of the Constitution as at present formed. Then it was said that if the franchise were enlarged the people would not return a good class of men. He confessed his experience of the lower classes in Irish towns led him to the conclusion that, while thoroughly national, they were strongly Conservative in their views as to the selection of the men by whom they wished to be represented; that their choice generally fell upon men who were well known to them, or who possessed local claims upon their notice. Compare broadly, and in a generous spirit, the classes in the two countries, those who were admitted to the franchise in England, and those on whom it was sought to confer the franchise in Ireland. Were the Irish people less educated? Nothing of the kind.

Then Ireland was much more free from ordinary crime than England, and there was no doubt that property was as much respected in Irish towns as it was in the towns of England. Some hon. Member said that if the humble Irishman was given the franchise he would be a Communist; while almost in the next breath it was said he would be the slave of his priest or Bishop. The two things were not consistent, and those who had recourse to such arguments were really at their wits' end to find arguments against the proposition before the House. It was said, however, that the Irish people had nothing to complain of, inasmuch as some of the Irish towns in proportion to their population had the same electoral advantages as towns similarly situated in this country, and the town of Belfast was generally referred to in support of that argument. The fact, however, seemed to be lost sight of that Belfast was a large manufacturing town, in which there were a great number of houses inhabited by the working classes valued over £4. But that surely was no reason why houses valued under £4 in other towns should be excluded from the right to confer a vote. When household suffrage was demanded for England it was never contended that because the agricultural districts did not contain as large a number of comfortable houses as the manufacturing towns the people living in them should be refused the franchise. Yet the argument drawn from the case of Belfast was urged as a reason for not acceding to such a proposal as that now before the House. It was further stated that if that proposal were agreed to some Irish towns would be deprived of their Representatives, while others, such as Waterford and Galway, would each lose one Member. Now, the population of Waterford was 26,000, and it should not be forgotten that there were English towns, such as Barnstaple with a population of 11,813, and Grantham with a population of 13,000, which returned two Members. Why, then, should Galway and Waterford lose one Member? Because it was said, although more thickly populated, they had not half the number of electors which places like Barnstaple and Grantham possessed. But how did that come to pass? It was due to the fact that the law precluded the people in the towns in Ireland from having their names placed on the electoral roll. But be that as it might, if it were rejected now, the day would come, for it was not far distant, when the Motion of his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Kildare (Mr. Meldon) would be carried; and he called upon the House, without waiting longer, generously to accord to the Sister Island that equality which was claimed for her, and to which she was entitled.

Mr. T. DICKSON said, that according to the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis), the only bright spot in Ireland was Derry, and there was nothing new in his speech but an increase of hatred and contempt for Ireland. The hon. Member had opposed every measure that promised to be beneficial to Ireland, and had regarded as a blunder not only the University Bill, but all the other attempts to redress Irish grievances. As for the immediate question before the House, the Irish boroughs had a population of 900,000 people, with less than 50,000 electors, while the same population in this country had 128,000 electors. Manchester alone had 10,000 more voters than all the Irish towns put together. Such a law could not be perpetuated. It was bad in principle, and wholly indefensible as a practical arrangement in places where the valuation was such that very respectable holdings conferred no vote. Then the hon. Member sneered at the occupiers of the thatched houses in Ireland. But from his (Mr. Dickson's) experience of Ireland, the occupiers of those houses were far better than the inhabitants of the back slums and alleys of Liverpool and Manchester, degraded by misery and vice. The hon. Member spoke of the poor miserable constituents of the South of Ireland; but he forgot to say anything about Londonderry. It was easy to understand why Derry was to be a close borough; because, if that constituency was extended, the hon. Member would have very little chance of being again returned to that House. Reference had been made to the necessity of denying the suffrage to the dangerous classes; but if there existed any elements of social danger he would rather bring them to the front than keep them in the background. He was inclined, however, either to dispute their existence, or to believe that they would disappear under the influence of better legislation. The hon.

Member for Londonderry triumphantly pointed to the Resolution of the hon. and learned Member for Kildare, which was defeated by 69 votes last Session; but in the division the Irish Members voted 3 to 1 in favour of it. The hon. Member said that Ireland wanted contentment and peace; but there would be no peace or contentment in Ireland so long as the laws continued as they were. There was plenty of capital in Ireland; but it would never be spent in Ireland on the land until they had a reform of the Land Laws. He (Mr. Dickson), supported the Motion of the hon. and learned Member for Kildare, and believed that before long a Bill framed upon it would pass through Parliament.

Mr. BLENNERHASSETT said, that the course of this debate must have removed the effect of the speech of the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis). On this question the Irish Members seemed to be met by the Government with what he might call a conspiracy of silence. The subject, however, was one which must come to the front and be settled. The borough Members were as eager for reform as the country Representatives; and he would point to the unanimity with which the Irish Members had year by year supported the Resolution. It had been fully discussed by the House at one time or another, and had at length been stripped of the fallacies that had originally attached to it, especially the idea that Ireland had an undue share of representation. It had been shown that if population were taken as the basis of representation Ireland should have 110 or 111 Members. The same inequalities of representation might be found in the boroughs of England and Scotland, and the argument that they would be intensified by the granting of this request of Ireland went for nothing. There were 60 English boroughs represented by a Member in the House with a population of less than 10,000 each, and the entire population of these boroughs was less than that of the county of Cork, which was represented in the House by two Members only. They could not look at this question in the light of the isolated instances which had been quoted by the hon. Member for Londonderry; but they must look at it as a whole. They had the great fact that while in England and Scotland 14 per cent of the urban population had the franchise, in Ireland the proportion was only 6 per cent. The grievance in the case of Ireland was all the stronger because only 37 out of the 103 Irish Members were returned by the boroughs, the others being elected on the high franchise of the counties. When the Irish people asked them to remedy this state of things they did not ask for any sweeping change; it was, in fact, a very much less sweeping measure than that which was introduced by the Reform Bill of 1867. That measure had increased the number of borough electors in England from 500,000 to 1,500,000. The present proposal would only increase the urban electors of Ireland from 50,000 to 100,000. The principle of the franchise was not to give it to a house, but to a man; and there was nothing intelligible in fixing the limit at a £2, £3, or £4 rating, while there was something which everyone could understand in giving it to the head of every household. The red-herring of re-distribution had again been trailed over the path of this Motion; but there was no reason whatever why the franchise question could not be dealt with without re-distribution. It had been done before, and however much he should like to see both questions dealt with together, there was no reason whatever why they should not be dealt with separately. They who demanded this change contended for the great principle of household suffrage, and that there should be no difference in the civil rights of people in different parts of the Kingdom; and the question to be considered really was whether they were willing that in the coming General Election the Irish people should have the same rights and liberties as the people of England. It was only a question of time, and of a little time, and it would be better to deal with it at once, for the House should not trifle with the excited people of Ireland.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: Sir, it seems to me a very remarkable feature of this debate that we have now been discussing, I think for five hours, the question before the House, and that not a single Irishman has expressed his views against the Resolution. We have had, it is true, a speech from an Irish Member; but I do not believe there will be found, in or out of this House, any Irishman who will use the language with respect to the Irish people which has been employed to-night by the hon.

Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis). I am speaking in the presence of Irishmen belonging to a different political Party from myself. I see opposite me the noble Lord the Member for Waterford (Lord Charles Beresford), the hon. Baronet the Member for Lisburn (Sir Richard Wallace), the hon. Member for Carlow, and the noble Lord the Member for Down (Viscount Castlereagh), who, we are happy to hear, is not a Member of the Home Rule Party, and I see the hon. Member for Roscommon, who, we are sorry to see, is a Home Ruler; but not one of these Conservative Irishmen will endorse the language of denunciation of a whole nation which we have heard from the hon. Member for Londonderry. The hon. Member for Londonderry ended his speech by saying that what Ireland wanted was tranquillity and peace; but the men who are the enemies of the tranquillity and peace of Ireland are the men who hold such language as has been held to-night from the Benches opposite. What is the argument against the Motion of the hon. and learned Member (Mr. Meldon)? It is this—that the great majority of the Irish nation are unfit for the enjoyment of the political privileges which the English and Scotch people enjoy; but I want to see the Irishmen in this House who will get up and say so. What is the argument in support of the Resolution? Against it we have heard none. We have heard vituperation enough to-night, but not a single argument. The argument in favour of this Resolution is contained in the single sentence that the same rights and privileges should be given to Ireland as are possessed by England and Scotland. In my opinion, that is the principle of the Union between England and Ireland; and when I am convinced that that is not the principle on which that Union reposes, I myself shall be opposed to that Union. How did the hon. Member for Londonderry meet that argument? He said, "Oh, the Union guaranteed 105 Members for Ireland, and if you give Ireland 105 Members you fulfil all that the Union requires you to do; and if you pass a Bill saying that 105 Members shall be nominated by the Lord Lieutenant the conditions of the Union would be fulfilled." Was there ever such a paltry — if it is Parliamentary language—I will say, was there ever such a pettifogging argument as that used on so serious a subject? The principle of the Union is very different from that; it is that the English Parliament shall deal with Ireland in the same spirit as that in which the English and Scotch people are dealt with. Anything else but that is nothing but the odious tyranny of the majority. The hon. and learned Member for Kildare (Mr. Meldon) says that you have refused to the inhabitants of the Irish boroughs the same rights that you give to the inhabitants of the English boroughs. Is that true, or is it not? If you come to examine the figures you will find there is nothing more extraordinary than the violence of the language of the hon. Member for Londonderry, except his figures. He talked, in language which I had hoped had died out even in Ulster, of the wretched people in the South of Ireland. He said—"Oh, yes, these things may happen; but come to the North of Ireland and you will see that the people are on the same footing, or nearly the same footing, as in England." I called across the House to him—"How about Londonderry?" and he went off to Belfast. But let us see how the figures stand as to Londonderry. Londonderry has a population of 25,000, and the electors number 2,500; and the hon. Member said—"We are on the same footing with England." I shall quote one or two towns with a similar population in England. There is Carmarthen, with 25,000 inhabitants, and the electors number 4,386; Canterbury, with a population of 20,000, and 3,000 electors; Scarborough, with the same population as Londonderry, but the registered electors are 4,267; Maidstone, with a population of 26,000, and 4,000 registered electors; and Perth, with the same population as Londonderry, and 4,000 registered electors. Now, if Londonderry had the same political advantages as Maidstone, or any other town I have mentioned, there would be more than double the number of voters in it. And what is the argument in favour of that condition of things? It is that the people even in the North of Ireland are unfit for the franchise. The position, in fact, which the hon. Member for Londonderry occupies on this occasion is this—that a moiety of the householders of the city he represents are not worthy to be intrusted with the electoral franchise

—it is a class, the hon. Member intimates, of which more than one-half may be termed the residuum. That is the position taken up in reference to this question, not, I am happy to say, by an Irishman, but by an Englishman. I want to hear some Irishman get up and endorse the statement that the greater part of the Irish people are unfit for the franchise and the political privileges which are given to the English people. Then the hon. Member said—"They live in such wretched houses; they live in £4 houses, and there are no such houses as that in England." Well, thank God, there are not in England; but if they are so poor, that is all the more reason why they should enjoy the privileges given to their richer brethren in England and Scotland. A more unworthy argument than that I do not think I have ever heard. But the strongest argument was reserved by the hon. Member for the last. "Oh," said he, "there exists sedition," and the hon. Gentleman read a ballad; and I do not think I ever heard anything calculated to do more mischief in Ireland except the speech of the hon. Member for Londonderry himself, and if I had to choose between them I would say that speech was the more mischievous of the two. Have we never had sedition in England? Ten years before the Reform Bill you had Peterloo, and all the melancholy history of sedition in this country—aye, and you held the same language then. You said—"We will refuse the extension of the franchise; there is sedition abroad;" but that has never been the language of the Party to which I belong. The way to cure sedition is not repression, but the giving to the people that which is just and due to them; and I ask you to compare the generation before the enfranchisement of the people by the Reform Bill with the generation which followed the Reform Bill, and say if the policy of the Tory Party before the Reform Bill was more successful than that pursued by the Liberal Party after 1832. The hon. Member then dragged in Home Rule by the shoulders, and was good enough to refer to a letter written by my noble Friend (the Marquess of Hartington) in reference to the Liverpool Election, and, with the extraordinary sagacity which distinguishes him, he discovered that I was the author. That is about as accurate as most of his statements. It happens that I never saw that letter until it reached its destination, and when I saw it I thought it a very sensible letter. There is no one more opposed to the doctrine of Home Rule than I am. [*Ministerial cheers.*] I am opposed to the doctrine of Home Rule, and why hon. Gentlemen opposite should applaud that sentiment I do not know. I was afraid I had said something wrong. I have always been surprised that the Irish people—who are a proud and sensitive people—should strain their position in the Imperial Legislature in order to acquire the position of a Colony; but though I am opposed to that principle, and shall on all occasions resist it, I am not going into extravagant denunciations of everyone who holds this extravagant principle, which I cannot agree in, and must condemn. The hon. Member has ventilated a new theory with respect to Home Rule; a new theory is put forward almost every night by Conservative speakers to explain their former and present connection with it. The reason why Home Rule was "harmless and respectable" under the Leadership of Mr. Butt was, no doubt, because it found its way in large part into the Conservative Lobby; but when it got into the desperate hands of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) it became "a slimy and venomous viper." Why, I should as soon think of applying such language to the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the hon. Member for Cork. The hon. Member's language here is what I would call the Home Rulers' *vade mecum*, which is full of the most splendid eloquence, and couched in language which only Irish orators can command. I am not aware of a more splendid or more determined statement against the connection between England and Ireland than is to be found in the book I hold in my hand. It is edited by the Hon. David Plunket, and it contains the speeches of the late Lord Plunket, who says—

> "Remove your Parliament and you abandon your country. You want to preserve the peace of Ireland. Where is the place to do it but in Ireland?"

Lord Plunket lived to see how mistaken he was in the views he then expressed. Another argument which the hon. Member for Londonderry introduces is this—"If you really were to extend equal franchise to Ireland as to England, you would extinguish every Conservative Member in Ireland—you would extinguish the Protestant representation in Ireland." So really it comes to this—that we are to refuse equal political representation to Ireland in order to maintain the old Protestant ascendancy and keep in Parliament 20 or 30 Conservatives. That is the argument of the hon. Member for Londonderry. Hon. Members below the Gangway ought to be pleased with the speech of the hon. Member, because he predicts the Home Rulers will number 80 in the next Parliament. That is to say, that the death warrant of 20 Conservative Members has been signed. Whether the hon. Gentleman happens to be one of them is not mentioned; but it does seem as if the hon. Member displays something of the death flurry of the whale. The hon. Member for Londonderry chooses to introduce this subject of Home Rule; but what is the real danger of the Home Rule cry? Of course, we all know that there has been connected with the Home Rule cry demands of a character which cannot be too strongly condemned; but the real danger of the cry for Home Rule is that fair and just demands will be refused. Now, I want to know what is the ground on which Her Majesty's Government are going to refuse this demand of an equal franchise on the part of Ireland? I have heard the arguments of hon. Gentlemen opposite, and I was sorry to see the Chief Secretary for Ireland cheering the denunciations of the Irish people by the hon. Member for Londonderry. I think that, whatever his own personal views may be, officially the Chief Secretary for Ireland ought to have abstained from cheering the remarks of the hon. Member for Londonderry.

Mr. J. LOWTHER: I beg pardon. I only cheered the sentiment, in which I perfectly concurred, with regard to the agitators.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: I thought it was a very general approbation of the speech of the hon. Member for Londonderry. I am glad, however, that he confined it to a very small part of that speech. There was not a single part of the speech of the hon. Member for Londonderry which, if I were an Irishman, I should not have regarded as a personal insult. No argument has been advanced against this Motion; and those who refuse a just and reasonable demand on the part of the great majority of the Irish people, and who invoke a Tory majority to resist that demand, are the real promoters and the true patrons of Home Rule.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Gibson) expressed surprise that the hon. and learned Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt) had been able to restrain his feelings so long that evening, and wondered what would have been the consequence to the House if the hon. Gentleman had delivered his denunciation immediately after the speech of the hon. Member for Londonderry. The performance of the hon. Member (Mr. Charles Lewis) seemed to operate upon the hon. and learned Member (Sir William Harcourt) in a way in which the red rag operated on a certain animal. That might possibly account for the conspicuous vehemence which the House had just witnessed. For his part, he (Mr. Gibson) did not understand the hon. Member for Londonderry to denounce the nation to which it was his own pride to belong, but simply understood the hon. Member to mention, with courage and boldness, some circumstances which he thought might induce the House to look at the question in a different point of view from that presented by those Members who supported the Motion. He understood the hon. Member to wish to show that a certain class of persons in Ireland, amongst whom a particular class of literature circulated, required a substantial change in their education before they could be trusted with any enlarged political powers. The proposal under consideration had become a kind of annual Motion, and there could be no doubt that the great ability with which the hon. and learned Member for Kildare (Mr. Meldon) introduced it deserved their admiration. He hoped that admiration would go on increasing from year to year. The hon. and learned Member had never presented the case in exactly the same form, for he always managed somehow to produce, by way of change, three or four slightly different figures. Instead, however, of producing this annual Motion in what might be supposed to be almost the last Session of the present Parliament, if the hon. and learned Gentleman had given way in order to allow progress to be made with an urgent Bill for the relief of the urgent necessities of the people of Ireland, he would have done more good for his country than he could do by bringing forward this proposal. That was a practical question, whereas this concerned abstract arguments. All the speeches of Irish Members on the other side had been particularly tame. They did not speak like men who were backed by the force of public opinion. As a matter of fact, public opinion in Ireland on this question was in a state of profound apathy. ["Oh, oh!"] He lived in Ireland a great deal more than hon. Gentlemen who cried "Oh!"—["No, no!"]—and he maintained there was great apathy from one end of Ireland to the other on this question. The argument of the hon. and learned Member for Kildare was to the effect that because 12 years ago household suffrage was granted in England it should have been granted in Ireland. In all the arguments adduced in favour of the Resolution, there were more showing the difference in a verbal sense than a difference in substance. If they made a superficial examination, and said there was a household franchise in England, but in Ireland the franchise was not called household franchise, they had not the difference in substance. They must look deeper and with more caution; and it would appear not so simple a matter as it seemed to be at first sight. Before the passing of the Reform Bill for England inquiries were made, and it was considered how many voters would be added to the electoral roll, and how the already existing constituency would be affected. The only fair way of comparing England and Ireland was to consider how many occupiers in England were rated under £4. As they were only one-ninth of the whole number, they were vastly outnumbered by those who were rated above £4; and, therefore, all classes were enabled to have a legitimate and reasonable voice in the representation. In Ireland, however, in 29 out of 31 boroughs, the male occupiers rated over £4 numbered 30,000, while 42,000 were rated under £4; so that the class who in England contributed one-ninth to the electoral roll in Ireland outnumbered all the other householders. These figures showed the necessity of looking at the question with caution, and considering it in all its bearings. Then the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Meldon) referred to the inequalities in places he selected; but these figures must also be looked at with regard to Irish figures. Take such places as Dungannon, Drogheda, Ennis, and Galway, what would be found? The main occupier there would be found rated, not merely under £4, but under £2, a class of house nowhere to be found among English boroughs; but in these four towns they would form the great majority of electors. So, if the Resolution were carried, they would hand over the entire electoral power to the very lowest householders in those towns. This of itself might not be decisive; but it showed that this was not a simple question, but one which required to be looked at from many points of view, and to be treated with caution. Then, look at Limerick City, where, out of 7,000 householders, nearly 2,000 were rated not only under £2, but under £1. Here was a question to be considered. He had spoken on this subject already as often as the hon. and learned Gentleman who introduced the Resolution; but there was one figure he had always ventured to give. He referred to Galway. In that borough were houses actually rated under 5*s.*, and here was a state of things having no counterpart in an English borough; and surely the facts entitled him to ask—where would the assimilation be? In the English boroughs the majority of the electors occupied houses rated at over £4; and in the Irish boroughs—in 29 out of 31—the majority occupied houses rated under £4. It was impossible to conceive a wider change. A good deal of capital had been made out of the array of figures; but he would refer to the case of Belfast, because it was the only large borough which in condition and circumstances resembled large English boroughs. There he found that the conditions and circumstances being the same, the growth of the Parliamentary constituency had been exactly on the lines of the great English boroughs, showing how little was the substantial difference between the two franchises—that which was called household franchise, and that which was called in Ireland the £4 rated franchise, working, when the conditions were equal, with much the same result. Before the last Reform Bill its constituency was under 4,000; and now, without any great increase of population, and under the ordinary working of the franchise, the constituency numbered 22,000. If these results had been attained in Belfast, the inference was that the condition of other Irish boroughs was radically and entirely different from that of English boroughs, and that to this difference must be traced the disparity which was to be found in the electoral rolls of English and Irish boroughs. The hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis) had been alluded to with severity, because he referred to the county with which he was connected; but it was a fact, standing out in strong relief, that many, if not all, of the boroughs in the North were thriving boroughs, while in the South they were the reverse. As many anomalies would be found to exist as those alluded to by the hon. and learned Gentleman (Sir William Harcourt). Armagh, with a population of 8,900, had over 600 electors; while Drogheda, with a population of 16,000, had a less number of electors. That, perhaps, would go to show that there must be some difference in the growth of the two towns, and in the conditions and circumstances of the people. In the South, or rather about the centre of Ireland, were eight boroughs with a smaller number of electors than in 1868. That would go to show that those boroughs were not advancing. They had no manufactures on which they could rely, and were merely places where agricultural labourers resided. They could not attempt to contrast them with any existing boroughs in England. The hon. and learned Member for Oxford quoted from a volume he brought down of the *Life and Speeches of the late Lord Plunket*, edited by his grandson, his hon. and learned Friend the senior Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Plunket); but he forgot to point out that the eloquent speech he quoted was delivered in the old Irish Parliament, and under conditions entirely different from the present. The hon. and learned Member for Kildare (Mr. Meldon) had not always been consistent in his attempts to reduce the borough franchise in Ireland, as on one occasion he had sought to reduce it, not to the household, but to the £1 rating level. He had read with attention the terms of the Motion of his hon. and learned Friend. He did not, from beginning to end, refer to the question of distribution. Was it not almost absurd to ask the House to affirm any Resolution in reference to the franchise of Irish boroughs—dealing with such a large question, leaving altogether out of consideration the question of re-distribution? It must be obvious to every man of sense that it was impossible for the question of the franchise of Irish boroughs to be dealt with without considering the question of re-distribution. It would be impossible to deal with the question of re-distribution without disfranchising many of the small boroughs, or grouping them in a way in which their identity would be entirely destroyed. That was a matter that deserved to be considered. Ulster would probably gain in re-distribution, and the South probably lose. He did not say that that was a consideration which should be decisive; but it should have been referred to by those who proposed to the House that the question of the franchise should be dealt with. There was not, he thought, in Ireland any very urgent demand for this Motion. Very few Petitions had been presented for it. He thought he was entitled to ask the House whether there was any great urgency in this Session, and at the present moment, in the midst of their discussions on the relief of distress in Ireland, for the adoption of such a measure? Did anyone believe that any single Irish grievance existed which was not brought forward in that House in every conceivable variety of form? He did not in the slightest degree deny the gravity of the question, or the right, and propriety, and fairness of his hon. and learned Friend in bringing it forward, and desiring that a fair and ample discussion of it should take place. It might be expedient some day to consider the advisability of having a wider extension of the franchise than at present prevailed in Ireland; but the subject could only be dealt with as part of a wide measure of reform, and taken in connection with the large subject of re-distribution of seats. Such a measure could only be arrived at after thorough consideration of all the difficulties which surrounded it. In supporting the Amendment of the hon. Member for Londonderry, he merely expressed his opinion that it would not be expedient now to affirm a Resolution which dealt incompletely and inopportunely with a most important and difficult question.

MR. JOHN BRIGHT: Sir, the speech of the right hon. and learned Gentleman who has just addressed the House (Mr. Gibson) has been confined almost entirely to objections to the proposition that is offered to the House by the hon. and learned Member for Kildare (Mr. Meldon). With regard to the suffrage, he makes many comparisons between the people of Ireland and the people of England, and he comes to this one distinction between the two—that, judging from the quality of the houses, and from the rent of houses in Ireland, the people of Ireland are very much poorer than the people of England. From that he jumps, or slides, or gets very rapidly to another conclusion—that poor people like these cannot be trusted with the franchise, and that a refusal ought to be given to the demand which they make for an extension of the suffrage. Now, that is the sort of argument with which we are all familiar. Hon. Gentlemen opposite constantly made use of it when we proposed—not we, but when the Government of the day proposed—to reduce the franchise in England to a £7 rental. It was declared on that side of the House by more than 200 votes, and by a great many voices, that to reduce the franchise to £7, and so increase the number of what they called the working men votes, all the classes above them would lose their just political influence. But to show how little they believed their own arguments, in the very next year they dropped the £7 altogether, or leapt over it, and agreed to a suffrage we did not then ask for—that a man should pay £7, £5, £4, £3, £2, or £1 rent before he should have a vote, but that it was enough that there were four walls about him and a roof over him, although his house might be no better than a wigwam, and they gave him a vote. And what has followed? Hon. Gentlemen opposite very commonly boast in their speeches in the country that they gave the franchise to the working man, and they speak of it as one of the great efforts of the statesmanship of their Party. I think, if that be so, the right hon. and learned Gentleman who last spoke ought to have very little influence with the House when he asks you to look at the great poverty of the Irish people, and to insist upon it because they are less wealthy, less well-employed, and less well-paid than the people of England, that therefore the franchise should be denied to them. The Irish who come over to this country are very like the Irish who remain in Ireland. I do not know whether they are more enterprizing, probably they have had more suffering who come here; they live in our towns, they have the franchise. I have found no considerable—perhaps no—harm whatsoever from their having the franchise like their English neighbours. There was another argument advanced by the right hon. and learned Gentleman opposite, which I think ought to have no influence in our consideration of this matter, and that is that you cannot deal with this question without dealing with the question of re-distribution, and that was also an argument which was used by the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis). Everybody knows that in Ireland the question of re-distribution is one that ought not to be long postponed. The right hon. and learned Gentleman says there has been no re-distribution there since the time of the Union. Some towns have grown larger, others have decayed; but all that would remain a question to be dealt with two years hence. If a Bill founded on this Resolution passed this Session or next Session, it would not make it more difficult to deal with the question of re-distribution, because you add a certain percentage to the constituencies of Ireland. That argument was just one of those things which were sometimes thrown in to make it appear that there is a special difficulty in this matter. We find the same difficulty in regard to the English representation. In 1867, when the last Reform Bill passed, a great deal was said about the question of re-distribution. There was a little alteration in the boroughs, and the question of re-distribution in England after the granting of household suffrage remains now a question that before long Parliament will be obliged to deal with. But I think there is one thing we must all be pleased with to-night—at least, I am. I have never heard an Irish question discussed by Irish Members in a manner so calm, reasonable, and judicious in every way, and argumentative, in a manner that nobody has been able to overthrow. One thing is admitted on both sides. The hon. Member for Londonderry even admits that there is great discontent—some call it disaffection, and some call it disloyalty—and the right hon. and learned Gentleman said that there is a great apathy with regard to the franchise; but although the Irish people are not rising in insurrection or holding great meetings on the subject, yet I will undertake to say that this question forms a part of what I may call the bundle or faggot of grievances which the Irish people have against this House, and if you would do them justice upon this matter you would find them more tractable to deal with in regard to other questions. The principal argument of the hon. Member for Londonderry was, so far as I understand, that the people of Ireland are discontented and so disloyal that if you give them a wider franchise you only give them greater power in this House to insist upon measures which this House is resolved it will never grant. His argument is that the Protestants will pretty nearly vanish from the scene, and Conservative Members from Ireland will henceforth be only a tradition. There are people who think that that would not be any great calamity; but if there be a good many Protestants in Ireland and a good many Conservatives I hope they will always find a sufficient representation in this House. But if, on the other hand, the population is Catholic and the constituencies are what you call Liberal or Radical, I do not see that anyone has a right to say in a Constitutional country, where representative institutions are the rule, that these shall not be fairly and abundantly represented in this House. If I were to address myself to the hon. Member for Londonderry or to any other Gentleman on that side of the House, I should ask them to look back and see how entirely, in past times, the politics of their Party have been pre-eminent and supreme in the government of Ireland. The land has been almost entirely in the hands of Protestants, and, for the most part, of Conservatives. The power of the landed proprietors, checked only a little by the power of the priests, was supreme in Ireland until the Act relating to the ballot came into operation. They had an "alien Church." I take the phrase used by the present Prime Minister; and the influence of that Church everywhere was in favour of the politics and policy of hon. Gentlemen opposite. They had a Lord Lieutenant, who came generally, if not always, from this country. They had a Chief Secretary who was generally an Englishman. They have one now who is imbued to the utmost extent—to my mind he is steeped—in all the prejudices and in all the dislike to freedom which I think is common upon the opposite Benches. The Chief Secretary disagrees with everything that has been done for Ireland, as far as I know, for the last I know not how many years. I say he is so steeped in this feeling, that I call a feeling hostile to the real interests of Ireland, that I do not think it is possible for him to absorb a single drop more. You have had, at the same time, a powerful police force all over Ireland paid for out of the Imperial taxes. You have a standing Army in that country, sometimes a very powerful one; in fact, there has been nothing that power could do which you have not done for the purpose of governing Ireland in past times according to your own principles; and I must say it seems to me that every departure from the old and the bad system you have systematically and persistently opposed, and what your fathers did you do now on this very night, and the result has been that generally throughout Ireland your political Party is hated by the population. Therefore, you find it dangerous to give the suffrage to this people—not dangerous to the country, but injurious and enfeebling to your own Party and your own policy. But then, representation becoming more liberal, you judge that it is dangerous, and that, if possible, it ought to be checked, if not suppressed, and that is really the difficulty of the hon. Member for Londonderry. He would not care a farthing how far you extended the franchise, if it would double the number of Representatives from Ireland who would take their seats upon those Benches. I should like to ask whether he thinks things can be much worse than they are? There are 60 Gentlemen on this side of the House who do not agree with hon. Members opposite, and it is said—not only on this, but on that side of the House—that in all probability at the General Election, which the hon. Gentleman condescends to tell us is coming by-and-bye, possibly, probably, 80 Members from

Ireland will take their seats on this side of the House. I think things could not be very much worse in the view of the hon. Member for Londonderry. I cannot help hoping he may be spared the pain of seeing so many. What hon. Gentlemen opposite are afraid of is of a real opinion—an opinion which they regret and wish did not exist—being so largely and fairly represented in the House of Commons. That opinion to them is hostile. Therefore, they are hostile to its representation here; and that is the reason that, after having given the franchise in England to every man who has a roof over his head, and who is the master of a house and the head of a family, they hesitate to confer the same extension of the franchise upon the people of Ireland. Now, I am of opinion that it is by your policy in past times that this unfortunate state of feeling has arisen and exists in Ireland; and if I sat on that side of the House—unless sitting there I were to lose what little common sense I have—I should try whether a departure from the old policy would not be wiser; whether, if we were to deal justly with the people there, we might not change the opinion which is unfavourable to the legislation and to the power of this Parliament. I think it quite possible that we might so change the state of things in Ireland that we should no longer breed and encourage that state of opinion there which you and we on this side also regret, but which has come down from the miseries and injustice and the cruelty and savagery of two centuries. That feeling cannot be remedied by arguments such as the hon. Gentleman the Member for Londonderry used. It can only be removed by creating in the minds of the people of Ireland a conviction that there is an honest and generous disposition on the part of the Imperial Parliament to treat them at least as well as we have been accustomed to treat the people of England. For myself, having heard the arguments tonight, and having heard very similar arguments for the last four or five Sessions, I confess I cannot see the case which any man has who opposes the Resolution of the hon. and learned Member for Kildare. If the Government refuse and reject it, they will be the means of adding one more sin to the multitudinous sins of their Party in connection with the government of Ireland. They make discontent chronic and incurable, and to them is due the difficulty which we have in the government of Ireland. You speak with disrespect, and with contempt, or with anger, of what you call agitators in Ireland. I was very much condemned at one time and denounced as an agitator; and yet from those Benches the other night you heard a long and elaborate and powerful defence of the policy of which I was then one of the advocates. I have always been of opinion that there are modes by which the Irish people may be made contented, well-affected, and loyal; but it is not by going back to or holding on to your ancient policy, but by a new policy—a policy which, as far as we have been able, we on this side of the House have for many years pursued—a policy that is liberal and generous and just, which is not looking to see whether it will return half-a-dozen more Members on this side of the House or the other — which does not point to the poverty of Ireland, and say, therefore, Ireland should not be treated as England—which does not interpose a pretence about re-distribution of seats when the question is not of a re-distribution of seats, but of the extension of the elective franchise. Your policy is different from that; and from this side of the House there has come, for many years back, whatever measures that have been passed, which have met in any degree the just demands of the people of Ireland. And, whatever be the state of opinion there, I hope it will never be said of the Liberal Party that they shrank for a moment from the just principles they have held, or took one single step that would justify the demand of a separate Parliament in the capital of Ireland.

MR. J. LOWTHER said, the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. John Bright) had alluded to him as being steeped in prejudices. [MR. JOHN BRIGHT: In regard to Ireland.] Well, the right hon. Gentleman said that as regarded Ireland he was steeped in prejudices. The right hon. Gentleman went on to say that he had an evident dislike to freedom. On the other hand, he (Mr. J. Lowther) was under the impression he had always been in favour of it, and that, from his place in Parliament, he had always defended the great principles of freedom of contract, and the right of Ireland to be placed on a footing of equality with other portions of Her Majesty's Dominions in that and in all other respects. It was true that, when legislation in an opposite direction was actually passed, he, in common with all loyal subjects, deemed it his duty to express his firm opinion in favour of maintaining for all classes the privileges conferred upon them by Act of Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman asserted, however, that he disagreed with everything. If the opinions of the right hon. Gentleman were everything he certainly did disagree with them. The right hon. Gentleman having disposed of him—which was a very small matter—proceeded to deal with the Party of which he had the honour to be a Member. According to the right hon. Gentleman, the Tory Party was hated by the whole population of Ireland. For his own part, he (Mr. J. Lowther) did not say that the Irish people loved the Tories much; but he asserted, without fear of contradiction, that they hated the Whigs more. The right hon. Gentleman said that the influence of what he termed the "alien Church" was such that the Tory Party had their own way in Ireland; also that that Party had had their own way with regard to the land; and the right hon. Gentleman intimated that the result of their long sway had been simple failure, for there had not been a single measure in favour of freedom. It was not for him to say what the effect of many years of the government, not of any one Party, but of both the great Parties in the State, had been with regard to Ireland; but the right hon. Gentleman omitted to say that a Party other than the Tories had also had its sway in Ireland. Not many years ago the right hon. Gentleman himself was a deservedly influential Member of a powerful Government. Without letting out any Cabinet secrets, he must say that the right hon. Gentleman then had his way with regard to Ireland. [Mr. JOHN BRIGHT: No, no!] Well, then, the right hon. Gentleman had not his way with regard to Ireland; but, at any rate, measures bearing to all outward appearance the unanimous assent of Her Majesty's then Advisers were submitted to Parliament as embodying the deliberate opinion of the Cabinet. What had been the effect of those measures? Those who had listened to the debates of the present Session would be prepared to answer the question for themselves; and it would, therefore, be unnecessary for him to detain the House on the subject at so late an hour. He might say that the measures promoted, as it now appeared, without the consent of the right hon. Gentleman—[Mr. JOHN BRIGHT: No, no!]—or, at least, with regard to which the right hon. Gentleman had not his way, produced an effect which the majority of the Members for Ireland, who represented what was called the popular Party, concurred in denouncing as having introduced a state of affairs which they almost unanimously condemned. Whether they were right, or whether the right hon. Gentleman's Colleagues were right, or whether he would have been right if he had had his own way, at any rate those measures had not been approved by the persons the right hon. Gentleman said at the present moment represented the feelings of the people of Ireland. One word now concerning the proposal before the House. The question was conclusively answered and ably dealt with by his right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General for Ireland; and he (Mr. J. Lowther) would not have ventured to trouble the House had not the right hon. Gentleman made such pointed reference to him. A large majority of the House were, he believed, thoroughly convinced that it was undesirable for Parliament so soon again to undertake the task of Parliamentary Reform. He would, however, rather address a few observations to that minority who appeared to think that almost any time was suitable for raising the question of a re-distribution of political power. The hon. and learned Gentleman who introduced the Motion, and many who had followed him, had endeavoured to disassociate the two questions of the reduction of the franchise and the re-distribution of seats. Now, it was obvious to the House that if this subject was to be dealt with at all it must be dealt with in a comprehensive way. He would like to ask the House what was to be the result if the Government were to assent to the Motion of the hon. and learned Member for Kildare? What was the Government asked to do? It was asked to set aside the Business of Parliament, and embark in a scheme which, to say the least, would constitute a very great demand upon the time of Parliament. Now, the hon. and learned Gentleman was appealed to last night to forego his annual Motion in favour, not of the Government Estimates, or of any particular measure in which the Government or the Conservative Party were specially or selfishly interested; but he was asked to forego the pleasure of this interesting discussion—for what? Why, to enable a measure to be passed, or, at any rate, to be considered in the House, which, over and over again, had been urgently demanded, not only by the Representatives of Ireland, but by the great bulk of the people of Ireland. The hon. and learned Member appeared last night to have taken as his model that sagacious Monarch who, during the conflagration of his city, thought it proper to indulge in the practice of instrumental music. The hon. and learned Member had thought it right to occupy the whole of that evening by the consideration of that subject, while several very urgent matters demanded their attention. The Government had no intention of following the hon. and learned Gentleman in that course; and he hoped that, under the circumstances, the House would not consider the Government were in any way unwilling to consider real Irish grievances at the proper time, though they objected to the time of Parliament being unnecessarily occupied when the relief of distress in Ireland should be engaging their attention.

Mr. SHAW said, that he had never interposed in a debate on the question before the House, for he really believed it was not arguable—the matter was so clear that no sound argument had ever been advanced against it. Nor would he have risen on that occasion but that he thought the course which his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Kildare (Mr. Meldon) had taken had been misrepresented. There was no particle of foundation for the assertion which had been made both by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland and the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, that his hon. and learned Friend stood in the way of the passing of measures for the relief of Irish distress. Nothing could be further from the thoughts of his hon. and learned Friend. The distress in Ireland was being relieved, and he would aid the Government in promoting the rapid passage of the Bills to which reference had been made. With regard to the statement made by the Attorney General for Ireland, he (Mr. Shaw) could say that the valuation of houses in the South and West of Ireland was much lower than that of houses in the North; and he had heard no argument which went to show why an Irishman who occupied a house valued at under £4 a-year, and which would represent a rental of £8, should be denied the franchise. He did not hear the speech of the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis); but he imagined, from what had transpired, that the question of Home Rule had been referred to. He did not mind how often that question was referred to. In fact, the oftener it was spoken of the better, because it was a sign that people were reasoning with themselves upon the subject. He did not deny that there was a Party in Ireland which aimed at extreme measures. It was not a large, but it was an energetic Party. There was also a large and influential Party in Ireland endeavouring to stem the torrent and to promote the prosperity of the country on the lines of the Constitution; and he had no hesitation in saying that they were encouraging the extreme Party, and discouraging those who sought to control them, by refusing to entertain such proposals as that which had been laid before the House by his hon. and learned Friend. Why, it was only the other day that he heard a Tory say that he preferred an extreme man to a moderate Home Ruler. The Irish Members might go back to Ireland and tell their constituents that it was not the slightest use to ask for reforms in that House. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland had said that the Irish Members had opposed the measures relating to Ireland which were brought forward by the late Cabinet. [Mr. J. Lowther: What I said was that those measures had not given satisfaction.] One measure had given satisfaction—namely, the Irish Church Bill. As to the Land Question, did the Irish Members now disapprove the Land Bill brought forward by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich? A few months ago he (Mr. Shaw) delivered a speech to his constituents, in which he pointed out very distinctly that the principles of the reforms they were aiming at as land reformers were all contained in that Bill. It seemed to him that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland thought that, while man was created several thousand years ago, landlords were specially created about one thousand years ago. He thought that the language used on both sides of the House with reference to Home Rule was not creditable. The Home Rulers were spoken of as persons who were doing something that aimed at the destruction of the integrity of the Empire. That assertion was as insulting as it was untrue; and he (Mr. Shaw) stood there to repudiate it in the strongest language he could use. The Home Rulers were doing nothing of the kind. They were aiming at reform in a direction of self-government that would, he was convinced, do more to cement the Union between the two countries than anything the House could do. He had not the slightest doubt that the measure before the House to-night would meet with the same fate as it had received from their hands on previous occasions. On them was the responsibility. He believed, however, the feeling of the English nation would ultimately come round to them; and he did not, therefore, despair of their cause.

Mr. MELDON said, after the protracted debate, he would not have troubled the House with any remarks in reply but for one or two observations which had fallen from the Chief Secretary (Mr. J. Lowther) and the Attorney General (Mr. Gibson). With respect to the personal attack made upon himself by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, he did not intend to enter into that controversy. The position occupied by the Chief Secretary in Ireland placed himself in the enviable position of not desiring the Chief Secretary's praise; in fact, with those in Ireland whose good opinion he (Mr. Meldon) cared for, praise from the right hon. Gentleman would not by any means be esteemed as commendation; he regarded rebuke coming from such a quarter as praise rather than otherwise. The attention of the public in Ireland was principally directed to the manner in which the right hon. Gentleman discharged his duties as Chief Secretary for Ireland by the frequent announcement in the daily papers of his departure from Ireland; and it had been the matter of much comment that very often accounts of the great race meetings in England speedily appeared in the Irish newspapers immediately after the announcements referred to. The terms in which the right hon. Gentleman, holding the position he did, spoke in his official capacity of former legislation by Parliament relating to Ireland, his denunciations of the national demand for a settlement of the Land Question as "undiluted Communism, and his persistent neglect of his duty, had so exasperated the Irish people that rebuke from him would certainly be appraised at its proper value. The total change which had now come over the management of Irish affairs since the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary was appointed, the way in which public questions were dealt with by him, the policy of exasperation which he followed, and the way in which deputations on important public questions were received, rendered it quite unnecessary for any reply on his part to that personal attack. The Attorney General for Ireland had complained that there was no agitation in Ireland in favour of the borough franchise. His words could have no meaning except to suggest that measures of this kind could only be carried to a successful issue by the violent exhibition of public opinion outside the House, and not by the constitutional method of Parliamentary agitation. That was a most dangerous doctrine to come from the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland. The present Chief Secretary, on a former occasion, made reference to the riots in Hyde Park, and seemed to indicate an opinion on his part that the reasonable grievances of the Irish people ought never to be redressed except under the pressure of a strong and fierce agitation. For his part, he strongly objected to any such views, and thought they were far more likely to come to a satisfactory settlement if they discussed points at issue in the quiet and reasonable manner in which this subject had been discussed that night.

Question put.

The House *divided*:— Ayes 188; Noes 242: Majority 54.—(Div. List, No. 10.)

Words *added*.

Main Question, as amended, put.

Resolved, That it is inexpedient to deal with the question of lowering the franchise in Ireland.

LICENSING LAWS AMENDMENT BILL.

LEAVE. FIRST READING.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

MR. STAVELEY HILL begged leave to move—

"That the Chairman be directed to move the House, that leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Licensing Laws."

The object of the Bill was to limit the jurisdiction of the Justices under the Licensing Act.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Chairman be directed to move the House, that leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Licensing Laws.—(*Mr. Staveley Hill.*)

MR. MELDON said, he did not wish to interfere with the proposed Bill of which he approved; but he wished to know from the Chairman if he had correctly stated the operation of the Rule—namely, that, in consequence of the hon. Member who had given Notice of opposition not having risen in his place to sustain such opposition, the Motion could be entertained by the Committee, notwithstanding that it was after half-past 12 o'clock. He (Mr. Meldon) was under the impression that such was not the practice, but that Notice of opposition having appeared on the Paper, once half-past 12 o'clock had been reached, it was not competent for the Committee, even with the express assent of the opposing Member, to entertain the Motion. He (Mr. Meldon) did not approve of the opposition to the Bill; but he thought it important that no doubt should exist as to the practice of the Committee in connection with what was known as the half-past 12 o'clock Rule.

THE CHAIRMAN observed, that the hon. and learned Member for Kildare had correctly stated the Rule of the House; but in this case the Order for Committee was read before half-past 12.

MR. COURTNEY thought that the Notice of opposition was one which applied to the Motion altogether.

THE CHAIRMAN said, that the hon. Member for Liskeard had stated the fact correctly; but in this case the half-past 12 Rule did not apply, because the Order for Committee had been called on and read before half-past 12.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 208; Noes 7: Majority 201.—(Div. List, No. 11.)

Resolved, That the Chairman be directed to move the House, that leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Licensing Laws.

Resolution *reported:* — Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. STAVELEY HILL, Mr. MUNDELLA, and Mr. ISAAC.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 76.]

ORDER OF THE DAY.

SEED POTATOES (IRELAND) BILL.

(*Major Nolan, Mr. George Browne, Mr. P. J. Smyth.*)

[BILLS 48, 68.] CONSIDERATION.

Bill, as amended, *considered.*

MR. MITCHELL HENRY in moving as an Amendment, in page 2, line 39, after the words "other seed," to insert the words "together with such an amount of artificial manure as may be considered necessary: Provided," said, that the object of this Bill was to supply seed potatoes in Ireland for the purpose of insuring a crop next year. These were not potatoes to be eaten, but potatoes to be grown, and it was well known that to grow potato seed with certainty it was necessary to use manure. From the knowledge of Irish Members, particularly those from the West, he could affirm that the people had no manure and no money wherewith to buy it. For the purpose of giving a discretion to the Guardians to supply manure provided they did not exceed the limit of £5, he wished to move an Amendment. It was no use providing people with seed unless they were also provided with a little artificial manure; and he thought every care should be taken that the seed to be distributed should really grow, and not perish in the ground. He begged to move the Amendment of which he had given Notice.

Amendment proposed,

In page 2, line 39, after the words "other seed," to insert the words "together with such an amount of artificial manure as may be considered necessary: Provided."—(*Mr. Mitchell Henry.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. W. H. SMITH was very sorry to state that Her Majesty's Government could not accede to the proposal. The question had been considered; but it did not appear to the Government that there was sufficient information in the hands of Boards of Guardians to justify placing upon them the responsibility of providing sufficient artificial manure. To estimate what amount of artificial manure would be sufficient would involve the necessity of knowing the dimensions of the ground in which the seed was to be placed. The result would be that the object the hon. Gentleman had in view could not be carried out. He must refuse to accede to the Amendment on the ground that the Guardians had not sufficient information at their command to enable them to exercise a wise discretion.

MAJOR O'BEIRNE opposed the Amendment, because he thought that most of the tenants in Ireland had a sufficient quantity of manure about their houses. He agreed most fully with what had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty.

MAJOR O'GORMAN said, that he was decidedly opposed to the Amendment. He had the best possible authority from some of the best farmers in Ireland for stating that artificial manure was destructive to the country. He was acquainted with farmers in Ireland who, when the wind was in a certain direction, went to their neighbours and requested them not to put artificial manure or guano on their farms, lest the wind should blow it beyond the bounds. If he thought there was anything useful in the proposal of the hon. Member for Galway he would be one of the first to rise and ask the House to adopt it. But there was no necessity for artificial manure. The ordinary manure of the country, if placed upon the land instead of being turned into the rivers and destroying the fish, would be amply sufficient. Let them have nothing to do with artificial manure—it was not suitable for the land of Ireland. Abundant opportunities were accorded to them by nature of manuring their land; and he thought they should use what the Almighty gave them, instead of introducing artificial manures. Let them have nothing to do with foreign destruction. Let them have protection—it was called Free Trade—but, in his opinion, it was fettered trade.

Question put.

The House *divided:* — Ayes 12; Noes 121: Majority 109.—(Div. List, No. 12.)

Clause 6 (Application of loans).

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 1, after the word "land," the insertion of the words "or labourers."—(*Mr. Shaw.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'or labourers' be there inserted."

MR. J. LOWTHER said, that they could not deal with the occupiers of land, and he did not see how the Amendment could be accepted.

MR. O'SULLIVAN trusted that the Amendment, which was a very useful one, would be accepted by Her Majesty's Government. There were, in his own district, men who took their land for a year or two, and who, although they did not pay rates, were actual occupiers. If the distribution were not extended to this class the land would remain idle.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN said, he knew of many cases of employers who let their land to men of the class described, and who supplied to them manure. He did not, therefore, see why they should not also supply them with seed. He felt himself obliged to oppose the Amendment.

SIR JOSEPH M'KENNA said, that the practice described by the hon. and gallant Member for Sligo (Colonel King-Harman) by no means obtained in the South of Ireland. He thought that the addition of the words "or labourers in the occupation of land" would more correctly express the intention of the hon. Member for Cork.

SIR PATRICK O'BRIEN trusted that the Amendment, which was made in the interest of cultivation, would be accepted by the Government, who, he was quite certain, were especially disposed to promote an increased supply of food in Ireland for the coming year.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, that the proposed Amendment would make the clause too wide, and might possibly lead to difficulties. Perhaps some words could be introduced which would make the application of this clause more clear.

MR. W. E. FORSTER did not see what should prevent those labourers who had plots of land given to them by the farmers as part of wages from receiving the quantity of seed named in the Bill. He thought that the case would be met by adding the words "or cultivator."

MR. SWANSTON thought that the Guardians should be authorized to furnish sufficient seed for the labourer as well as for the poor farmer. His experience was that every poor labourer who made an agreement for an acre or a quarter of an acre of land would be very much benefited by this; and it was, moreover, extremely desirable to afford him an opportunity of obtaining good seed.

MR. SULLIVAN said, the object of the Amendment was to obtain a distribution of seed for those persons who, although cultivators of the land, would not come within the meaning of the clause. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had remarked that surely those persons who cropped the land must be occupiers of the land; but technically that was not so, inasmuch as they would not be rated as occupiers. He suggested that the words "persons who occupy, cultivate, or crop the land" would probably express the meaning of his hon. Friend, and would afford a full definition of the class of men who would be affected by the Amendment, and whom it was very necessary to supply with seed, for although they were very small men, so to speak, it would be a very great boon to them.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. GIBSON) had not heard one suggestion from hon. Members as to how the cost of the seed was to be recovered, or upon what security the money was to be advanced. It was absolutely impossible to accept the Amendment, because it interfered with certain clauses in the Bill which, if the Amendment were introduced, would have to be entirely recast, thereby greatly delaying and prejudicing the measure.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY thought that the House was proceeding with more haste than speed. If they had had time and opportunity to consider the measure, it would have been made clear to the Government that the very people who required seed to be distributed to them were the small class of cultivators who had been spoken of. He repeated that, looking beyond all technicalities, the object of the measure should be that those who had to live upon potatoes during the next year should have seed to sow. The labourers were the very persons who would be worst off in Ireland during the coming year. The words suggested by the hon. and learned Member for Louth (Mr. Sullivan) appeared to him to meet the case completely. They were confronted with the difficulty that they were requiring the people to re-pay the cost, when, as a matter of fact, they were unable to pay. He had always pointed out that this was very bad policy. They gave the people their food —Indian meal, and other things—gratuitously, and said that they were not pauperized in consequence; but when the Government supplied them with seed potatoes, they put forward the objection that not to demand re-payment of the cost would be to pauperize the people. In his opinion, the seed ought to be given gratuitously. He hoped that Her Majesty's Government were not indulging in the dream that the cost of this supply of seed would all be re-paid, for he felt certain that the people would not have the money wherewith to make re-payment, inasmuch as they would plant their potatoes for the purpose of eating them. He reminded the House that the Bill had never been thoroughly considered by the House or by hon. Members fully acquainted with the subject; and he trusted that the words suggested by the hon. and learned Member for Louth would be accepted, for unless they were, the very poorest class, who were really in want of seed potatoes, would be excluded from the operation of the measure.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN entirely differed from the hon. Member for Galway in the opinion which he had so often expressed that the people would not repay the money advanced for the supply of seed potatoes. He (Colonel King-Harman) was, on the contrary, perfectly sure that they would do so, even if they had to sell the last of their property, and as long as they had one farthing left. They were not asked to repay till August, 1881.

MAJOR NOLAN wished to remove the impression that the Government would lose any money by the operation of this Bill. Although the rates might lose a little, the Government were perfectly safe, inasmuch as they had the security of the occupying tenant *plus* the rate of the Union. It was impossible that the Unions could allow the Government to make any loss. There might be a few debts which would fall upon the electoral divisions, besides some other small ones that would very properly have to be borne by the neighbours; but the evil would be by no means so great as had been represented by some hon. Members. The 7th clause provided that—

> "Where a person is not rated under the Acts for the relief of the poor, the Guardians shall make a special rate for the purposes of this Act, in which he shall be rated."

It would, therefore, be possible to bring in some labourers not included in this Act. He suggested that the words "persons who, in the opinion of the Guardians, are capable of giving adequate security" should be added. In the event of the Government accepting this Amendment, they could not possibly lose any money; and, in his opinion, therefore, it ought to be agreed to, otherwise he should vote for the proposal of the hon. and learned Member for Louth (Mr. Sullivan).

MR. O'SULLIVAN thought the Amendment most admirable, and knew of many cases in his own district where its application would be very beneficial. There were in his own county a large number of shopkeepers and others who tilled the land, which would otherwise remain untilled by many of the small farmers; and if the application for seed came from these persons there would be a double security for the rates, because there would be the remainder of the occupiers in the district to fall back upon. He could not see any reason why the Government should not accept the Amendment.

MR. SHAW suggested that an Amendment might be made by which the case of cultivators of the land not being occupiers might be met.

MR. ASSHETON CROSS said, that he should be happy to move an Amendment to insert, in page 3, line 1, after the word "land"—

> "Cultivator of the land not being the occupier on the application of the occupier, and on his security."

Amendment (*Mr. Shaw*), by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment (*Mr. Assheton Cross*) *agreed to.*

Major Nolan

MAJOR NOLAN said, he had an Amendment to move, as to which he had not come to any agreement with the Government. They had, however, been good enough to hold out some hope that the wishes of Irish Members might be met.

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 6, to leave out the word "ten," and insert the word "twenty,"—(*Major Nolan,*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the word 'ten' stand part of the Bill."

MR. J. LOWTHER said, that the proposal of the hon. and gallant Gentleman to increase the limit of value from £10 to £20 was one to which he felt himself unable to accede. The Government had thought that the limit fixed, namely £10, would be amply sufficient, and that opinion had been confirmed by the information they had received. Still, if that did not meet the views of hon. Members on the other side, he was willing to alter the limit of value from £10 to £15.

MR. SHAW advised the hon. and gallant Member for Galway to accept the proposal of the Government.

MAJOR NOLAN said, he had great pleasure in accepting the proposal.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Then the word "ten" struck out, and the word "fifteen" inserted, instead therof.

Other Amendments made.

Bill read the third time; Title amended.

Bill *passed,* with an amended Title.

MOTIONS.

METROPOLIS IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES MODIFICATION PROVISIONAL ORDERS BILL.

On Motion of Sir MATTHEW RIDLEY, Bill to confirm the Provisional Orders of one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State for the modification of the Metropolis (Whitechapel and Limehouse) and the Metropolis (High Street, Islington) Improvement Schemes, *ordered* to be brought in by Sir MATTHEW RIDLEY and Mr. Secretary CROSS.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 77.]

CHARITIES (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. MELDON, Bill to amend the Law relating to Charities in Ireland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. MELDON and Mr. ERRINGTON.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 78.]

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. PEASE, Bill for the closing of public houses in England and Wales on Sunday, making provision for the Sale of Liquors during certain hours for consumption off the premises, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. PEASE, Viscount CASTLEREAGH, and Mr. TREMAYNE.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 79.]

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS.

Select Committee *re-appointed*, "to inquire into the Contagious Diseases Acts, 1866—1869, their Administration, Operation, and Effect:" —Mr. CAVENDISH BENTINCK, Mr. STANSFELD, Colonel ALEXANDER, Sir HARCOURT JOHNSTONE, Viscount CRICHTON, Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE, General SHUTE, Mr. BURT, Mr. BULWER, Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY, and Five Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection:—Power to send for persons, papers, and records; Five to be the quorum.

All Reports and Returns relating thereto referred to the said Committee.

Instruction to the Committee, That they have power to receive Evidence which may be tendered concerning similar systems in British Colonies or in other Countries, and to report whether the said Contagious Diseases Acts should be maintained, extended, amended, or repealed.—(*Colonel Stanley.*)

COMMON LAW PROCEDURE AND JUDICATURE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. GREGORY, Bill to amend the Common Law Procedure Acts and the Judicature Acts, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. GREGORY, Mr. WADDY, Mr. WHEELHOUSE, and Mr. RIDLEY.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 80.]

House adjourned at a quarter before Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 18th February, 1880.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*Second Reading*—Municipal Corporations (Property Qualification Abolition) [43]; Commons Act (1876) Amendment [61]; Epping Forest Act (1878) (Continuance) * [73], *discharged.*

Second Reading—Referred to Select Committee—Leases [30].

QUEEN'S SPEECH—HER MAJESTY'S ANSWER TO THE ADDRESS.

THE COMPTROLLER OF THE HOUSEHOLD (the Earl of YARMOUTH) *reported* Her Majesty's Answer to the Address, as followeth:—

I thank you sincerely for your loyal and dutiful Address.

Your assurance that the measures which will be submitted to you will receive your careful consideration affords Me much gratification, and I rely with confidence on your hearty co-operation with Me in My earnest endeavours to promote the welfare and happiness of all My Subjects.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

LEASES BILL—[BILL 30.]

(*Mr. Marten, Sir Henry Jackson, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Charles Lewis.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. MARTEN, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, its object was to empower the Court of Chancery to afford relief, where it thought proper, against forfeiture of leases in cases of non-performance of covenants, and of certain other obligations not being pecuniary obligations. The existing state of the law on the subject occasioned serious hardships to tenants. The ordinary form of a proviso for re-entry in a lease was that in the event of the tenant failing to pay the rent, or to perform the covenants of the lease, the landlord was entitled to re-enter and avoid the lease. The Courts of Equity, from the earliest times, had viewed a proviso for re-entry on account of non-payment of rent rather as in the nature of a security than as a penalty to be specifically enforced, and had, consequently, relieved tenants against any forfeiture attempted to be asserted on the ground of the failure to pay the rent reserved. In the same way they had also been in the habit of relieving against forfeiture for non-payment of damages, or in respect to any pecuniary obligation which the tenant was under. But, unfortunately, when the question arose whether they would adopt the same principle in regard to covenants of repair, and the like, as in the case of pecuniary defaults, the Courts of Equity held that they were powerless to grant such relief. By an Act passed in 1859, however, relief could be granted in the case of failure to insure according to covenant, provided that no damage had ensued, and that the covenant of insurance was also thenceforward carried out. But the Act required that when the relief was granted a memorandum of it should be made on the lease, and also provided that the relief should not be granted twice. Now, this Bill proposed that the Court should be invested with power, in any action or proceeding in which it was asked to give effect to any proviso for re-entry, or other stipulation by way of forfeiture for any breach of any covenant, to inquire into the case, and to refuse to give effect to such proviso or stipulation and to relieve against the forfeiture. Such refusal and relief might be either absolute or on terms as to making good any defect of repair or other defect, paying costs or damages, or preventing a future breach, or as to any other matter, according to what should appear to the Court to be just and reasonable in the circumstances of the case. The Bill also proposed that there should be no forfeiture for the breach of any covenant that any assignment or under-lease should be prepared by the lessor's solicitor, or any particular solicitor or person. It likewise contained a clause securing the mutual rights of several tenants holding under the same lease. In each of the Sessions of 1876 and 1877 the House had sanctioned the principle of his Bill by passing the Forfeiture Relief Bill, which he had had the honour to introduce, and which received a general acceptance on both sides of the House, but which had failed to pass the other House. That Bill, in 1876, failed in the other House on account of the late period of the Session when it stood for consideration there. Lord Cairns had expressed on that occasion the opinion that it was a good measure, and one that would not be productive of injury to lessors. In 1877 the Bill was sent up to the other House early in the Session, but was not proceeded with then. For himself, he believed the present Bill would prove beneficial to lessors by increasing the value of their property. He would, with the permission of the House, refer to instances of great hardship under the existing law to illustrate the necessity for the remedy which he now suggested. One of them was that of a barrister, whose letter he held in his hand, and who, in 1871, purchased a lease of four houses worth about £5,000. In 1873, his clerk, who received his monies, had instructions to pay the premiums for fire insurance; but, as he unintentionally omitted to do so, the lessor threatened to bring an action of ejectment, although, on receiving an explanatory letter, the lessor did not persevere. Subsequently, however, the clerk made a similar slip, when the lessor brought five actions of ejectment against the lessee and his tenants. Relief was thereupon sought under the existing Statute, but was strenuously opposed under the allegation that what took place in 1873 amounted to a waiver out of Court. When there was a waiver out of Court, it was, by the Act of 1859, equivalent to the grant of relief by the Court, and under the Act there could be only one relief, so that a second relief was put out of the power of the Court. The Justices of the Court of Queen's Bench Division held that the lessor's contention was correct, and the result was that an accidental slip in the non-payment of £1 16*s*. for fire insurance involved the loss, probably, of £5,000 by the forfeiture of the lease. In another case, the particulars of which were furnished by a highly respectable London solicitor, there were 40 houses held under various under-leases, but all comprised in the same superior lease. About five of these houses were allowed to get out of repair, and were not repaired by the under-lessee of them after notice served upon him to do so. Thereupon the landlord on the superior lease brought ejectment for the whole 40 houses, on the ground that they were all forfeited by reason of the neglect to repair the few. There being no defence, judgment of ejectment was obtained, and the unfortunate tenants—themselves perfectly innocent—who had kept their own houses in repair, were compelled to throw themselves upon the mercy of the superior landlords. The landlords exacted a fine equivalent to about 10 years' purchase of the ground rents, besides heavy costs. The third case was that of a mortgage of leaseholds. The particulars of this case were also furnished by the solicitor already referred to. There the mortgagor committed a breach of covenant, for which the landlord brought ejectment. The writ was served upon the mortgagor, who allowed judgment to go by default. The effect was that the mortgagees found themselves completely in the power of the landlord, who, after the payment of heavy expenses, consented to the granting of a new lease. Another instance, mentioned in a letter addressed to *The Times*, on January 19th, by Messrs. Hunters, Gwatkin, and Haynes, well-known solicitors, was thus described—

> "An action of ejectment is now pending in which one of the London hospitals seeks to destroy a lease of property in the City of London, valued at many thousand pounds, on the ground of a breach by the lessee of the covenant to repair. The action was commenced without any previous notice. The lease is in mortgage, and the mortgagees have offered at once to do whatever repairs the lessors require; but the hospital have declined this offer, and state that their right to recover possession is perfectly clear, and that they intend to continue the action."

A graphic account of another grievous case was given by Lord Justice James in "Hodgkinson *v.* Crowe" in the 10th volume of *The Law Reports Chancery Appeals*. The Lord Justice said—

> "A case in which I was counsel, many years ago, produced a strong effect upon my mind—a case where a forfeiture was enforced, in which there was no legal defence, and no equitable relief could be obtained. Extensive copper works were forfeited by reason of a breach of covenant in not keeping up a fence which had become perfectly useless, and the not keeping it up did not do one shilling's worth of damage to anybody. Cases of that kind showed how oppressively such a power may be used."

The only other case with which he would trouble the House was one in which a leasehold house was mortgaged to a building society. This house was kept in excellent repair, and no complaint respecting it was suggested by the landlord. Unfortunately, the lease under which it was held comprised another house; and this being out of repair the landlord brought ejectment for both houses. Judgment was obtained, and the property was given up, the only terms on which a new house was offered being prohibitory. These six examples of the mischief and injustice which might be done under the present state of the law were enough, he submitted, to show the necessity for the interference of the Legislature. They could be multiplied indefinitely by cases drawn from the experience of those who were concerned, either professionally or otherwise, in transactions relating to leaseholds. It was in order to remedy such cases of hardship that the Bill was now introduced. He, however, disclaimed any intention to interfere unduly with freedom of contract, and contended that his Bill was in conformity with the principle recognized by the Court of Chancery that covenants were to be construed in a reasonable manner, and according to their proper interpretation. An eminent conveyancer had written to him that the landlord generally reserved to himself the power to evict, with the view of using it only in flagrant instances; but it was sometimes exercised oppressively, and the present Bill was likely to give fair relief against that grievance. If those covenants of re-entry were intended when they were entered into to be dealt with in an unreasonable way, they would be in the nature of gambling contracts, which ought not to be enforced. Was it to be said that a property worth, it might be, £100,000, merely because some fence or road of no importance to anybody was not made, or some other trumpery covenant in the lease had been infringed, was on that account to be subject to forfeiture? That would be perfectly monstrous. Relying on the precedent afforded by the Chancery Amendment Act of 1858, he proposed, in this Bill, to vest in the Court a discretion as to enforcing forfeiture, just as under the Act of 1858, in the case of breaches of covenant, the Court had now an absolute discretion to substitute the giving of damages for an injunction. He did not propose to deal with those cases in which the renewal of leases was made dependent on the performance of certain covenants, or in which the lessee had a power to determine the lease contingent upon his performance of the covenants, or with building agreements which provided that unless the ground was covered with buildings before a certain time the landlord should not be bound to grant a lease. Nor did he deal with cases of an option to purchase, where the option was only to arise on the performance of some condition precedent, such as the payment of the purchase money before a certain time. The Bill was, moreover, limited to covenants or engagements in the lease; and it was, consequently, obvious that it did not affect the determination of the lease from bankruptcy, or any other cause, independent of covenants in the lease. He had been anxious, in framing the Bill, to confine it to well-known and notorious cases of hardship; and he proposed to give a discretionary power to grant relief from forfeiture in cases of non-fulfilment of covenants, so that the Court might be able to do justice in the classes of cases to which the Bill related. When the Court was asked to give effect to a provision for re-entry by way of forfeiture for breach of covenants and engagements the Court might inquire into the case, and it might grant relief against forfeiture absolutely, or upon terms which it might think fit to impose. The object of another clause of the Bill was to give tenants under the same lease mutual rights, and the effect of it would be that one tenant might require other tenants under the same lease to perform, as regarded their respective tenements, all the covenants which ought to be performed, so as to prevent forfeiture. He did not propose to interfere with the making of covenants, nor with damages for breach of covenant, or with injunctions against breach of covenant; but he desired to save the leaseholder in certain cases from the absolute forfeiture of the lease. He repudiated the least intention, in bringing forward this measure, to cast any imputation on the great body of landlords generally. The Corporation of the City of London was one of the best landlords, and if all other landlords were like it his Bill would not have been necessary. London, too, was, for the most part, parcelled out among great proprietors, most of whom would never think of enforcing these forfeitures; but even under these great proprietors there were many intermediate and smaller landlords, who might be needy, and who sometimes might not scruple to act oppressively. The rights of any landlord acting fairly would not be in the slightest degree impaired by that Bill; but, on the contrary, the value of leasehold estates would be greatly increased by the security the measure would give against the capricious enforcement of covenants of re-entry. The Bill had received the approval of, among many others, Mr. Lawrence, the President of the Incorporated Law Society, and the Master of the Rolls. The former had written of it as follows:—

> "The Bill is an excellent measure, and will, if it passes, effect a great improvement in the law."

The Master of the Rolls had said—

> "I fully agree with the principle of the Bill, and I have long considered a measure of this kind to be highly desirable. With regard to the terms on which relief should be granted, I think the Court should have as wide a discretion as possible."

The wide discretionary power thus recommended by the Master of the Rolls formed the basis of the present measure, and he hoped the House would read it a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Marten.*)

Mr. Alderman COTTON, in moving that the Bill be read a second time that day six months, said, that his object in doing this was that more time might be given for the consideration of it, as it had come suddenly before the House, and the Corporation of London and other bodies and persons had not had sufficient time to look carefully into its merits or demerits. The Bill would, if passed, affect all existing leases as well as all future leases, and it would interfere with very important and serious interests. Besides, Clause 2 contained very objectionable matter—it was a thin crust between what was proposed and tenant right. It refused a lessor the right of re-entry and obliged him to go to a Court of Law. He thought this involved considerable injustice. If any right of re-entry was interfered with it should be with the landlord's consent, and not by the Court of Chancery absolutely. Clause 3, with some slight improvements, would have his heartiest sympathy. It was only last night that his attention had been called to the Bill. The matter would be brought before the Corporation of the City of London to-morrow, when it would be carefully considered. It was possible that the Bill might be made a very good one; and if the hon. and learned Member would allow it to be referred to a Select Committee he would withdraw his opposition. He concluded by moving that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months." — (*Mr. Alderman Cotton.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now,' stand part of the Question."

MR. OSBORNE MORGAN supported the Bill, which introduced no new principle, but merely extended one that had been adopted many years ago by Lord St. Leonards. He denied that the Bill unduly interfered with the freedom of contract, and said that questions of forfeiture, so far as the landlord was concerned, might safely be left to the Courts, which would not be over-indulgent to tenants. The Bill would, he believed, not only do justice to the tenants, but be an actual benefit to the landlords. Delay would be fatal to the measure, the principles of which had already been fully discussed; and he should, therefore, be much surprised if the hon. and learned Member who had charge of the measure consented to the proposal to refer it to a Select Committee.

MR. ROBERTS cordially supported the Bill, which would give satisfaction to thousands of lessees. He was also quite sure that no landlord would object to it.

MR. RIDLEY thought the measure hardly corresponded with the observations which had been made in its favour. It was evident that the Bill was drawn a great deal too widely. They had to remember that it referred to every sort of lease issued in England. No doubt cases of hardship might be quoted, and he did not dispute their existence; but there was an old maxim which set forth that "hard cases made bad law.". In his opinion, the Bill would interfere unduly with the rights of property. Clause 2, which was the most important part of the Bill, in the most sweeping manner gave power to the Court of Equity to interfere in every case in which the landlord endeavoured to enforce his rights, whereas the Bill known as Lord St. Leonards' measure only interfered in cases of accident or mistake. The power of interference with the contract was at present limited to cases in which the landlord could be put in the same position as if no breach of covenant had been committed. The present measure would extend this power of interference to cases in which such re-instatement would be impossible. He admitted that there might be some cases in which it would be desirable to protect tenants from arbitrary conduct on the part of landlords; but the Bill would permit interference where no such conduct could be complained of. If the Bill were sent to a Select Committee it might come back in a shape more generally acceptable to the House; but at present the scope of the Bill was too wide.

MR. GREGORY thought there were hardly sufficient grounds for referring so short and simple a Bill to a Select Committee. It had been argued that it would be hard that a man should be compelled to have recourse to a Court of Law in order to enforce his remedy by forfeiture. But, as a matter of fact, the position of the party, as regarded the necessity of having recourse to law after a breach of covenant, was not altered by the present Bill. He thought the jurisdiction of the Court of Equity might very safely be extended in the manner contemplated in the Bill, which he characterized as a just remedial measure and one well fitted to meet cases in which a breach of covenant was taken advantage of for enforcing hard terms on the lessee.

MR. FRESHFIELD held that the Bill, in its present form, went too far. It should not be forgotten, he thought, that lessees were bound to know the contents of their leases, and that they generally did so. He could not agree with the hon. and learned Member opposite, who seemed to think that deeds under hand and seal were to be treated as nullities. There were many reasons why landlords should insert special covenants in their leases. With regard to the covenants against under-lease and assignment, and the submission of mortgages and assignment to the landlord's solicitors, these provisions were neither unreasonable nor unnecessary, in many cases, from complications and special circumstances affecting the land. The Bill assumed that provisions of this nature were of no value, and accordingly did not give effect to them. As regarded the Bill generally, he thought the House should have had a little more Notice. He believed the Bill had not been in print until the previous day. He should, therefore, support the proposal to refer it to a Select Committee.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir HARDINGE GIFFARD) said, that no doubt cases of great hardship existed with respect sometimes to covenants in leases. At the same time, it was a wide proposition to say that it should be permitted to a Court to say, in every case, in what way covenants deliberately entered into should be carried out. The Bill offered no restriction, but simply the Court was to be at liberty at its discretion to break the bond between the parties. He was not surprised to learn that the lawyers, as a body, were in favour of the Bill; but it was because he thought that it would have a mischievous effect in rendering liable to litigation every transfer of real property that he considered the remedial portions ought to be guarded against. He reminded the House that the Lord Chancellor was about to make a proposal on the same subject; and in view of that, and the other circumstances of the case, if the Bill were referred to a Select Committee, he should not oppose its second reading.

MR. MARTEN said, he would assent to the proposal to refer the Bill to a Select Committee.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* to a Select Committee.

And, on March 2, Committee *nominated* as follows:—Mr. ATTORNEY GENERAL, Mr. LAW, Mr. Alderman COTTON, Mr. LEVESON GOWER, Mr. GREGORY, Sir HENRY JACKSON, Mr. FRESHFIELD, Sir JAMES LAWRENCE, Mr. CHARLES LEWIS, Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN, Mr. RYDER, Mr. O'CLERY, Mr. ALLCROFT, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. MARTEN:—Five to be the quorum.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS (PROPERTY QUALIFICATION ABOLITION) BILL—[BILL 43.]

(*Mr. Mundella, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Burt, Mr. Sullivan.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. MUNDELLA, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, he did not intend to address the House at any length, as it was the fourth time the Bill had been before them, and on two former occasions he explained its provisions at considerable length. Besides, he should find himself in a considerable difficulty if he attempted to say anything new on the question, and he thought discussion was so completely exhausted on the 3rd of April, last year, that it would be trespassing on the patience of the House if he attempted to go into its merits again. But during the past year there had been many new facts cropping up, which strongly bore out his arguments in favour of the provisions of his Bill. He was much gratified to find that the Press of the country, whether Conservative or Liberal, were almost unanimously in favour of the Bill. Her Majesty's Government, he thought, made a mistake in not assenting to it when he moved the second reading last year, as they did when he introduced it in the year 1877; and there was little doubt that the Bill would have become law three years ago but for the action of a private Member, who, at the last stage, moved an Amendment against it. *The Times* newspaper, on the 3rd April, last year, said, in reference to his Bill, that although he had failed again to persuade the House to abolish property qualification, he could console himself with the thought that it was rejected by a very small majority. If he wanted any arguments, he might rely upon some of the speeches of hon. Members made on that occasion. One was made by the hon. Member for Morpeth (Mr. Butt), who made the remarkable boast that he had lived for about 14 years in the borough he then represented, and during the whole of that time he never resided in a house which gave him a qualification to sit as a member of a local board, and yet he was able to sit in that House and assist in Votes which now amounted to about £87,000,000 a-year. Another hon. Member also said he could point to a village in Northumberland where there were 2,000 inhabitants, and not more than 15 of them were eligible to serve on the local boards. The village was noted for its bad sanitary arrangements, and many of the houses were in the most wretched condition. During the last year some score or two of cases had been submitted to him showing the hardship of the present system, which was nowhere harder than in the Metropolis. The qualification for vestrymen varied in different districts. In Clerkenwell it was a rating of £25 some years ago; but now it had been raised to £40, because more than one-sixth of the houses of that district were rated at over £40 a-year. It was, therefore, a fluctuating qualification. One of the oldest and most popular members, who had served on the vestry from its foundation, was excluded because of the insufficiency of his property qualification. Another, who had served 10 years, was also disqualified, and a member of the select vestry was obliged to resign, and had to remain out for two years, until he was able to obtain a qualification of £40 a-year. Another case came under his notice the other day. A very respectable man in the Metropolis was asked to stand as a vestryman, but because he was only rated at £39 a-year, or £1 below the legal qualification, he was disqualified; but although he might not stand as a member of the select vestry, he was now standing for a large borough and for a Member of Parliament, with every probability of his being elected, at the next General Election. The present system, in his opinion, was absolutely absurd. At Liverpool, the other day, a man who was returned by many thousands of votes was disqualified, because of some defects in his qualification. He could scarcely believe that Her Majesty's Government were willing that this state of things should continue; and he looked forward with pleasure to an hon. Member of the Government getting up in his place and accepting the second reading. If he might point to any particular part of the Kingdom where municipal government was well conducted, and infinitely better conducted than in any other, he would refer the House to Scotland. There was, in his opinion, no part where municipal government was so pure and above suspicion as in Scotland. The whole system was most admirable, and yet local self-government was there carried out without any qualification whatever. In conclusion, the hon. Gentleman said he must apologize to the House for having spoken even to the length he had, because he thought the case was no longer arguable. It was argued out, when it was said men might enter that House without any qualification, or become members of the school board, and vote away hundreds of thousands of pounds a-year without being electors. Even on Boards of Guardians men could be elected who were merely ratepayers, and property was left to take care of itself. They had a right to give electors a free choice of those who would serve them best; and his Bill would simply remove certain disqualifications which prevented the electors from getting the best men to serve them upon their local boards. He begged to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Mundella.*)

MR. CLARE READ said, he had no intention of opposing the Bill; in fact, he wished it every success in its main object; but, at the same time, he thought it right to give Notice that when the Bill should go into Committee he would endeavour to have Guardians excluded from its provisions, for a Guardian was a dispenser of the rates for the purpose of relieving destitution; and it would, consequently, be a great mistake, even if only a small portion of the members on Boards of Guardians came from a semi-pauper class.

MR. SALT said, he had received a letter from his right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Sclater-Booth), who was unavoidably absent in consequence of domestic affliction, desiring him to say that he would not raise any opposition to the second reading of the Bill, but that he wished to reserve the right of criticizing its details in Committee, more especially with respect to the qualification for Poor Law Guardians. The hon. Member in charge of the Bill would remember that, on a former occasion, he (Mr. Salt), on his own responsibility, opposed the second reading of the Bill, when it was rejected by a majority of eight. He (Mr. Salt) retained his own opinion and his own private right of action. On this occasion, however, speaking and acting on behalf of his right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board, he should offer no opposition to the second reading.

MR. W. E. FORSTER congratulated his hon. Friend (Mr. Mundella) upon the success of his Bill. At the same time, he was sorry that the Government had not seen that there was no defence to the present law earlier. He trusted there would be some law on the subject this Session.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Tuesday* next.

COMMONS ACT (1876) AMENDMENT BILL—[Bill 61.]

(*Mr. Mundella, Sir Henry Peek, Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. MUNDELLA, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, he hoped it would meet with the same good fortune as the one which had just been read a second time. It was not often that he troubled the House with Bills; but this Session he happened to have two, and they were both small and useful ones. The Bill he had now to lay before the House was a Bill that proposed to amend the Commons Act of 1876, in one particular only, and in accordance with the recommendation of the Select Committee of the Commons that sat last year. Sheffield nearly lost one of its most beautiful open spaces through a defect in the Commons Act, and the Committee made a recommendation that the limit of the area should be extended. His Bill went to remove the defect in the Act, and proposed that the limit should be extended in the case of large manufacturing towns; and the 1st section of the Bill provided that the Act should apply to any common situate within 10 miles, instead of six, of any town with a population of 25,000, or within 15 miles of any town not having a population of less than 100,000, and that any such common should be considered a suburban common, within the meaning of the Act. London had had the power of bringing all the commons within 20 miles of the Metropolis into the suburban area; and he could not conceive that any provision was ever better conferred upon the Corporation of London, or had been exercised with a greater beneficence than that had by the Corporation of London. By the exercise of that provision the Corporation of London had saved to the people of the Metropolis many commons, and last year they had saved Burnham Beeches, one of the most sylvan scenes in the land. That was saved entirely to this country by the operation of that single clause. That clause had just brought Burnham Beeches within its area by half-a-mile. If it had been half-a-mile further out, Burnham Beeches would have been destroyed. When it was proposed to inclose Maltby Common, which was within 12 miles of Sheffield and six of Rotherham, the Mayor, Master Cutler, and others, several of whom were Conservatives, gave evidence against the enclosure, and nothing could have been stronger than the protest then made against the state of the law which would have deprived the inhabitants of the district of the common, and 31 naturalists' societies of Yorkshire petitioned against it; and the common was only saved by the exercise of the half-past 12 o'clock Rule, and his playing the part of an Obstructionist for three months. He begged to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Mundella.*)

Sir WALTER B. BARTTELOT said, looking at the state of the House, he should not oppose the second reading of the Bill, but reserved to himself the right of opposing it on going into Committee. He asked that it should be remembered that there were other interests besides those of the populations of large towns to be considered. The limits to be conceded must be carefully guarded, and he thought those proposed were far too extensive, especially with regard to towns of 25,000 inhabitants. The matter would be complicated in cases where there were minerals and such like things. He would also remark that, as a Member of the Committee to which the hon. Gentleman had referred, he had treated the evidence which had been brought before them entirely according to its worth, regardless of whether it was given by Conservative or Liberal witnesses, and that it was only a small portion of the common more immediately in question, on which scarcely a single person went in the course of the year, that it was sought to enclose.

Sir MATTHEW WHITE-RIDLEY said, he was not prepared, on the part of the Government, to object to the second reading of the Bill, though he reserved to himself the right of opposing it on its subsequent stages, inasmuch as the 3rd clause seemed to him to go beyond that which was the intention of the Committee to recommend.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Wednesday* next.

House adjourned at Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 19*th February*, 1880.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Seeds (Ireland) * (10); Local Courts of Bankruptcy (Ireland) * (11).

Second Reading—Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement (Scotland) Act (1875) Amendment (8).

RAILWAY BRAKES.—QUESTION.

EARL DE LA WARR asked when the Return which had been promised in regard to Railway Brakes would be presented?

LORD HENNIKER, in reply, said, the Return mentioned by his noble Friend—under the Continuous Brakes Act, 1878—had been prepared for some time; it was in the hands of the printer, and he hoped it would be circulated in the course of a few days.

RUSSIA—THE EXPLOSION AT THE WINTER PALACE.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

EARL GRANVILLE: My Lords, I wish to ask the noble Earl at the head of the Government a Question of which I have given him private Notice. It is, Whether Her Majesty's Government have received any information beyond that which has appeared in the newspapers with regard to the deplorable outrage at St. Petersburg, and the attempted assassination of the Emperor of Russia, which has not only filled all classes in this country with horror, but has sent a thrill throughout the whole civilized world? My Lords, it is impossible to express the indignation which is felt with regard to the repetition of such attempts. If anything could strengthen that indignation it would be the utter disregard of human life, even without the circle of the intended victim, exhibited by the persons who perpetrate these outrages. The escape of the Imperial Family must be a cause of general satisfaction; and certainly, as far as we are concerned, it must be an additional satisfaction that a member of our own Royal Family was one of those who were providentially saved from this attempted murder, and that the illustrious Princess is still spared to be a comfort to her distinguished mother. I do not know that I can add anything to what is generally reported, and to what I readily believe—that Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Edinburgh has been the greatest comfort and solace to her family in this most terrible moment.

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD: My Lords, we have received intelligence to-day on this subject; but it throws no light on the origin, or originators, of the terrible crime to which the noble Earl has referred. I am sure your Lordships will fully agree with the noble Earl in what he has said of this outrage. It is, indeed, one of those events which make us doubt of the progress of that civilization of which we are so constantly boasting. War in the home is worse even than civil war. But it must be some satisfaction that, notwithstanding there have been, unfortunately, many victims of this crime, no member of the Imperial Family has sustained injury. The whole country shares in that satisfaction, not diminished when we recollect that among the members of the Imperial Family is a Princess of our own House, one who possesses the respect and affection of this country, who on this occasion has shown those great qualities which those who have the honour of her acquaintance are familiar with, and who has refused to leave at this moment a scene of so much danger and so much domestic suffering.

ARTIZANS AND LABOURERS DWELLINGS IMPROVEMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT (1875) AMENDMENT BILL—(No. 8.)

(*The Earl Beauchamp.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

EARL BEAUCHAMP, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, it gave to Scotland the same augmented power as was given by Act of Parliament last year in connection with the Artizans' Dwellings Bill for England, with which their Lordships were familiar. The principal provisions of this Bill were contained in two clauses, one of which dealt with the difficult matter of the assessment of compensation, whilst the other had reference to the restrictions as to the buildings to be erected on the sites acquired under the Act of 1875. By this Bill the power of the municipal authorities would be enlarged, so as to allow them on certain conditions, and subject to proper safeguards, to take provision for the working classes, by erecting buildings outside the limits of areas cleared under the Act.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Earl Beauchamp.*)

Motion *agreed to:* Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Monday* next.

PUBLIC HEALTH—TRICHINOSIS—SCHOOL SHIP "CORNWALL."

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

Lord THURLOW, in rising to ask Her Majesty's Government, Whether it is true that an outbreak of "trichinosis" occurred in January last on board the reformatory school ship "Cornwall" lying off Purfleet on the Thames; and if so, how many cases occurred, and what number have terminated fatally: Further, whether the outbreak has been traced to the use of American or other foreign pork; and, in that case, what precautions, if any, have been taken by Her Majesty's Government to guard against the very serious dangers to which the public are exposed by the importation from abroad of pork infected with this disease? said, the question was one of fact, and was one of equal importance to producers and consumers of meat. It was also one on which much anxiety prevailed. If, therefore, this reported outbreak of trichinosis had occurred, he trusted it might be in the power of Her Majesty's Government to state that they had taken proper and adequate precautions to protect the public, and especially the poorest classes of the public, who were most exposed, from a serious danger from which they were practically unable to protect themselves. Last year, when a Question on this subject was asked by the noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Belmore) the noble Duke the Lord President of the Council replied that cooking afforded a sufficient safeguard; but it was to be feared that was not so, as a higher temperature, and a longer duration of high temperature, were required to kill the trichins than were sufficient for many ordinary culinary purposes. This had, he believed, been amply proved by experiments in Germany and America.

Earl BEAUCHAMP said, he was not surprised that the noble Lord had called attention to this subject; but all the information he was able to give in the matter was that the Local Government Board had, at the request of the Home Secretary, instituted an inquiry. That inquiry had not as yet terminated, or at least the Report of it had not been delivered. He was unable, therefore, to say more than that the attention of Her Majesty's Government had been directed to the subject. If the noble Lord would repeat his Question later on, he would be happy to afford any information on this subject that it might be then in his power to give.

RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND).

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

The Earl of DONOUGHMORE asked Her Majesty's Government, If they will state the number of baronies that have applied for permission to hold extraordinary presentment sessions up to, or as near as possible to, the present date? The noble Earl said, he should not trouble their Lordships with any lengthened remarks on the subject of his Question, as the matter had lately been considered in that House, and the Government had taken measures for the relief of the distressed districts in Ireland. Those measures had given great satisfaction; and, indeed, there was only one particular question upon which any doubt had been expressed by any Member of their Lordships' House. He thought, however, if the information for which he asked their Lordships were supplied, they would be in a better position to deal with the Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill when it came before them.

LORD ORANMORE AND BROWNE wished to make a few remarks before the Question was answered. It was, no doubt, very difficult to devise measures for proper relief, especially in such times as these of great distress and of great disturbance, and the plan of extraordinary presentment sessions was one which threw great responsibilities on the cesspayers. At the Westport sessions the other day a number of resolutions were discussed and adjourned; but one great resolution was forced on the cesspayers—namely, that they should fix the rate for wages. The rate was fixed at 3*s*. higher than the ordinary price at this season of the year. Coming from Connaught, and being, unfortunately, old enough to remember the experience of the last Famine, he thought it was only right, at any rate, to take steps, even if they amounted to a confiscation of property, to prevent any person from dying of starvation. But it should be borne in mind that the proposed system of relief works was similar to that adopted during the last Irish Famine, and on that occasion many persons did die of actual starvation. The abuse then was incompetence, and a number of Government officials; now it would be that great jobs were perpetrated in the interests of contractors. Good roads were spoiled, and large sums were expended in opening up new roads which were not required. In respect of such works, how could the Government ascertain what was necessary, what works were desirable, and how they should be carried out? The Government were liberally advancing money to landlords at a very low rate of interest; but the carrying on of useless works at the public expense would be raising a mischievous competition against works of utility being carried on by the landlords with those loans. It would be better to pay the people wages for draining and for sowing crops than for such works as many of those undertaken in 1847. He trusted the Government would re-consider the matter, and, if not too late, introduce some modification of the scheme.

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND AND GORDON said, that the remarks made by the noble Lord would have been appropriate on the occasion when the noble Lord opposite (Lord Emly) called attention to the relief works, and a discussion ensued on the observations of that noble Lord; but he thought it would be for the convenience of their Lordships if he postponed anything which he might have to say on the topics referred to by the noble Lord (Lord Oranmore and Browne) till the Bill relating to those relief works came up from the other House, which he hoped would be shortly. In the meanwhile, he must say that he did not agree with many of the points to which the noble Lord alluded, or the conclusions arrived at. With regard to the Question of his noble Friend (the Earl of Donoughmore), he regretted that through inadvertence he was not able to give him an answer in the exact terms of the Question he had put down on the Paper; but he hoped the information he should be able to give him would greatly, if not altogether, satisfy the object he had in view. His noble Friend had talked about baronial or extraordinary presentment sessions having been applied for, and these having been ordered; but he might remind him that it did not at all follow, where even extraordinary presentment sessions had been convened and assembled, that in all these cases they should agree that presentments should be made. On the contrary, up till now very few had been held; and in more than one case the sessions declined to present for the sum of money originally proposed. He put in a list of extraordinary presentment sessions ordered to be convened. The number he had counted up was 84; and he believed, though it was impossible to give the exact figure, that something like 20 had been declined by the Irish Government, for reasons which they thought sufficient to induce them not to agree to the applications. He hoped this information might meet the views of his noble Friend; but he would endeavour, before the Bill came under discussion, to find out the exact number of those that had declined.

LOCAL COURTS OF BANKRUPTCY (IRELAND) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill for the Establishment of Local Courts of Bankruptcy in Ireland—Was *presented* by The LORD CHANCELLOR; read 1ª. (No. 11.)

House adjourned at half-past Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter before Five o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 19*th February,* 1880.

MINUTES.]—Standing Committee—Kitchen and Refreshment Rooms (House of Commons), *appointed* and *nominated.*

Public Bills—*Ordered—First Reading*—Glebe Loan (Ireland) Amendment Act (1878) Amendment* [81]; Parliamentary Franchise* [82]; General Police and Improvement (Scotland) Provisional Order (Broughty Ferry)* [83].

Select Committee—Medical Act (1858) Amendment (No. 3)* [67], *nominated.*

Referred to Select Committee—Medical Act (1858) Amendment* [10]; Medical Appointments Qualifications* [71].

Committee—Relief of Distress (Ireland) [1]—R.P.

Committee — Report — Artizans' Dwellings Act (1868) Amendment Act (1879) Amendment* [63]; Ancient Monuments [51].

QUESTIONS.

AFGHANISTAN—THE WAR—THE EXECUTIONS AT CABUL.

Sir CHARLES W. DILKE asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether the documents which are being sent from India with regard to the executions at Cabul will contain a complete list of the names of the Afghans executed, together with a full statement of the offences with which they were charged, and the findings of the Courts or Commissions which tried them?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: Sir, I am afraid I cannot answer the Question of the hon. Baronet beyond saying that the Government of India state that they are sending home a complete tabular statement.

ARMY—RETURN OF COURTS MARTIAL.

Sir PATRICK O'BRIEN asked the Secretary of State for War, When the Return relating to Army (Courts Martial), for which an Address was presented on the 31st of July 1879, will be laid before the House?

Colonel LOYD LINDSAY: Sir, the Return has been sent for presentation to-day.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—THE UNION OF BAILIEBORO.

Mr. BIGGAR asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, For what reason the Local Government Board have neglected to schedule the Union of Bailieboro, co. Cavan, and why they have not replied to the several applications made to them by the said guardians?

Mr. J. LOWTHER: Sir, I beg to point out that the Local Government Board has not the power of adding Unions to the Schedule. That power is vested in the Lord Lieutenant. The duty of the Local Government Board is to forward applications from the Boards of Guardians to the Irish Government, accompanying them with their own views on the subject. It appears that the Board of Guardians of the Bailieboro Union made application, in the month of December, to have their Union added to the Schedule. The Local Government Board conducted an inquiry in the usual manner, and forwarded the application to the Irish Government, with the expression of their own opinion that the Union should not be added to the Schedule. The Local Government Board only did their duty respecting it. Subsequently to that decision, on the report of the Local Government Board, Bailieboro had been added to the list of Scheduled Unions by the Irish Government.

RUSSIA AND WESTERN ASIA—LIEUTENANT COLONEL MACGREGOR.

Mr. GRANT DUFF asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, a few days before the assembling of the Constantinople Conference in December 1876, a Report was made to the Government of India by Lieutenant Colonel Macgregor, Assistant Quartermaster General, in which, amongst other things, a plan was sketched for the despatch of 30,000 British troops to Armenia viâ Trebizond, and of 60,000 Indian troops to the same Country viâ Bagdad; whether it was printed by public authority and at the public expense; whether it was sent to various newspapers by the orders of anyone acting under the Government of India, or, if not, by whose orders; whether there would be any objection to lay the Report itself upon the Table, the said Report having been already printed in the "Statesman" newspaper, and to add the Appendices, which have not yet been printed; whether any document as hostile to this Country as this Report is to Russia has been found at Cabul or elsewhere; and, if so, whether there would be any objection to lay it also before the House; and, whether, with a view to make more generally intelligible the policy of Her Majesty's Government in Western Asia, it is now in his power to explain the large military preparations which were made in the Punjaub about the time Colonel Macgregor's Report was signed?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, I never saw or heard of the document to which the hon. Gentleman refers until his Question was put on the Paper. I believe my hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for India has some information which he can give to the House on the subject.

MR. E. STANHOPE: Colonel Macgregor, on returning to India in 1876, went through Western Beloochistan with the knowledge of the Secretary of State and of his Council in London. The object was the extension of our geographical knowledge in that country and in Persia, and his instructions were to "proceed to India by way of the Karun River and Beloochistan," in company with Captain Lockwood. The route selected by Colonel Macgregor was *viâ* Constantinople and Armenia; and on the 10th of November, 1876, in a letter to the India Office, dated from Erzeroum, he said—

> "I am writing a note on what I saw, which I will send you in case it might be any use to the Government at home."

This note was subsequently received, and was ordered to be confidentially printed at the India Office. It never had any official character whatever, and has not been recorded in any department of the India Office. It appears to be the same as that printed in *The Statesman* of January 17, 1880, but how the editor of that newspaper obtained a copy of it we do not know. The note is of a confidential character, and it is clearly not one to be presented to Parliament. It is of precisely the same class as the Papers stored in the Intelligence Department of all Armies, which are obviously treated as confidential. Colonel Macgregor is now Chief of the Staff to Sir Frederick Roberts at Cabul. I am not aware that there were any large military preparations in the Punjaub in 1876. Certain precautions were taken in consequence of the attitude of the Ameer Shere Ali and of some of the Border Tribes.

MR. GRANT DUFF: The Chancellor of the Exchequer has not answered the most important part of my Question—Whether any document as hostile to this Country as this Report is to Russia has been found at Cabul or elsewhere; and, if so, whether there would be any objection to lay it before the House?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: The House must see that it is obviously impossible for me to enter into a discussion upon such a subject.

RE-DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS—CORRUPT PRACTICES AT ELECTIONS.

MR. MILBANK asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, When it is his intention to bring in the Bills relating to Corrupt Practices at Elections and the Redistribution of the Six Seats?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, until we have got through the Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill I do not like to give any Notice for other measures. As soon as we have disposed of that Bill I will give Notice on the subject to which the hon. Gentleman refers.

CRIMINAL LAW—CASE OF EDWARD JONES.

MR. OSBORNE MORGAN asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the case of Edward Jones, who, on the 27th of January last, was convicted by the Llangollen Bench of Magistrates of illegal fishing in the River Dee, and sentenced to the full penalty of five pounds, with one pound for each fish, and costs, in all ten pounds fifteen shillings, and, in default of payment, to two months' imprisonment with hard labour, which sentence he is now undergoing, the Bench having refused an application for leave to pay the fine by instalments; and, whether, having regard to the high character which the accused received, and to the character of the evidence in the case, especially to the strong evidence of an alibi adduced for the defence, he will not advise Her Majesty to remit the remainder of the sentence?

Mr. ASSHETON CROSS, in reply, said, that the matter had been gone into thoroughly by the Bench, who were perfectly satisfied they had come to a right decision. The proper course would have been for the man to have appealed, when the whole matter would have been gone into by a competent Court. It was most inconvenient to make an appeal *ad misericordiam* to the Home Secretary. Since he heard from the Bench of Magistrates a Petition had been presented in which it was stated that somebody else had confessed to the deed; it was possible, therefore, that a mistake had been committed, and in such circumstances it was his duty to make inquiries. These had already been instituted.

CUSTOM HOUSE RE-ORGANISATION.

Mr. PEASE asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the contemplated reorganisation in the Statistical Department of the Custom House, which has been protracted for a very long period, is likely to be much longer delayed?

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON, in reply, said, that the matter was being proceeded with as quickly as possible, and would not be much longer delayed.

MONETARY CONFERENCE (PARIS)—SILVER.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, considering the constantly increasing accumulations of silver in the treasuries of the United States and France, and the necessity under which those Countries must soon be of either paying out silver as a legal tender or demonetising it and throwing their stocks on the market, Her Majesty's Government intend to resume the negotiations proposed by the United States, with the view of obviating excessive fluctuations, by an agreement among the principal silver-using Countries?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: Sir, I presume, by the expression "negotiations proposed by the United States," the hon. Gentleman refers to the proposal made some time ago by the Government of the United States, under the provisions of an Act of Congress, to several European nations for the sake of adopting a common ratio as between gold and silver for the purpose of establishing the international use of that ratio, and securing a fixity of relative value between those metals. That proposal, as the hon. Gentleman is aware, was so far entertained by various Powers that a Commission was appointed, which sat upon it in Paris. England was represented on that Commission, and a Report was presented to Parliament; but there is no intention on the part of Her Majesty's Government to take any steps towards resuming those negotiations.

AFGHANISTAN—THE WAR—MILITARY EQUIPMENTS.

Mr. GOURLEY asked the Under Secretary of State for India, If he will be good enough to inform the House if the whole of the troops engaged in the Afghan campaign have been provided with proper winter camp equipments, including fur coats, caps, and mittens; if it be correct that large numbers of transport animals when forwarded from the depôts were either too old, too weedy, or too sore, as to be totally unfitted for working purposes; whether it be also true that large numbers of valuable elephants, horses, and bullocks were lost for want of food and proper drivers; and, whether he can state why General Gough's supplies at Jugdullack, when ordered to relieve General Roberts, had been reduced to six days' food and forage?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: Sir, as regards the first part of the Question of the hon. Member, the best answer I can give is to read a telegram from the Viceroy, dated January 10, 1880, in reply to an inquiry by the Secretary of State—

> "Clothing.—Stewart's, Bright's, and Watson's forces fully supplied, except few waterproof sheets; clothing ready for Ross's Division. At Cabul there was deficiency, which was partly completed by local supplies, and remainder was despatched some time ago. Waterproof sheets and Balaclava caps were deficient; all else complete."

I suppose that in all campaigns some transport animals are unfit for use from some of the causes mentioned by the hon. Member; but I have no reason to think that the number was in this case large. Nor have I any reason for supposing that large numbers of elephants, horses, and bullocks have died. As regards the supplies of General Gough when ordered to advance, we have no knowledge whatever; but the fact remains that he did advance, and had a sufficiency of supplies.

TURKEY—ANGLO-TURKISH CONVENTION (APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS) —HAFIZ PASHA.

MR. RYLANDS asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople has been instructed to make any representations to the Porte in the nature of a protest with reference to the recent honours and employments conferred by the Sultan upon Hafiz Pasha, who was mentioned in Lord Derby's Despatch, of the 21st September 1876, as being responsible for the perpetration of great atrocities in Bulgaria, and whose dismissal from office had been demanded by Sir Henry Layard immediately before the conferring of the honours and employments above referred to?

MR. BOURKE: No, Sir. No such instruction as that suggested by the Question has been sent to Sir Henry Layard, and mainly for this reason—that he, as Her Majesty's Ambassador, never loses an opportunity of letting the Porte know what the opinion of Her Majesty's Government is upon appointments and rewards of this character.

THE METROPOLITAN POLICE—PAY AND ORGANISATION.

MR. W. M. TORRENS asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, What effect he proposes to give to the recommendations of the Departmental Committee, appointed during the Session of 1878, to inquire into the pay and organisation of the Metropolitan Police?

MR. ASSHETON CROSS: Sir, in consequence of the recommendations made by the Departmental Committee appointed during the Session of 1878 to inquire into the pay and organisation of the Metropolitan Police, the condition of certain grades, both as regards pay and promotion, has already been considerably improved. But with respect to the pay of the Force generally, I see nothing in that Report to lead me to believe that any general rise of wages is at all necessary. The question of lodging, especially for married men, requires, and is now receiving, the most serious consideration. Certain other recommendations have been made as to the general organisation of the Force, some of which have been adopted, and others, no doubt, will eventually be introduced. But I see nothing in that Report to lead me to think that, in general, a great change in the organisation of the Force is wanted. I think it much better that changes of this kind should be introduced gradually, as opportunity offers. That is the course I have pursued, and am still pursuing. As the Question has been put, I wish to state, on behalf of the officers and men—both those in uniform and detectives—that they are deserving of the greatest praise for the efficient manner in which they have performed their duties in the Metropolis.

AUSTRIA—RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN BOHEMIA.

MR. ALDERMAN W. M'ARTHUR asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether it is true that a communication has been received from the Austrian Government to the effect that the Emperor intends to give full effect to the promise which he made lately to a deputation from this Country, that freedom of worship should be granted to the religious bodies which have suffered persecution at the hands of the provincial authorities; whether his attention has been called to a letter in the "Daily News" of Monday the 16th instant, from a British member of the deputation, conveying the information that—

> "Barbarous persecution has lately broken out against the 'Free Reformed' in Bohemia; that heavy fines have been inflicted, our pastor condemned to pay 1,100 florins for simply holding a religious service; that the utmost concessions of the Government will result practically in excluding all children of Protestant parents, between seven and fourteen, from the religious meetings in which the latter take part, and from Sunday schools;"

and, whether, considering such persecutions are in direct opposition to the pledges given by Austria at the Berlin Conference, Her Majesty's Government will see fit to make any representations upon the subject?

MR. BOURKE: Sir, no representation on this subject has been made to us by the Austrian Government; and, as at present advised, Her Majesty's Government have no intention of making any representation upon the subject.

NAVY—THE ROYAL MARINES.

Captain PRICE asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether it is a fact that the non-commissioned officers and privates, Royal Marines, have been, since 1876, in respect of pay, considerably in arrear of those of equal rank in the Army; whether there are any and what counterbalancing advantages; and, whether Her Majesty's Government propose to abolish the difference in pay between the two branches of the Service?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: Sir, there is no intention to assimilate the rates of pay and allowances of the Marines and the Army. It is true, as I have often stated in this House, there are considerable differences existing between them; but the conditions of the two Services differ so much that no true comparison can be made between them. An important advantage enjoyed by the Marines, as compared with the Army, is, of course, the permanent establishment of the several divisions at Portsmouth, Chatham, Devonport, and Walmer.

EDUCATIONAL RETURNS.

Sir UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, Whether he can give any explanation of the fact that the Blue Book of the Department, heretofore published during the Session, was last year not delivered to Members until the 5th of November; whether, seeing that the School Inspectors' Reports are dated November, December, and January, he will take measures to insure their reaching the hands of Members at an early period of the Session, before the information they contain is out of date; and, by what date he will be able to present this Session the Annual Report, and the Return corresponding to Paper C.—2,302 of last year?

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: The Return in question contains, in addition to the Inspectors' Reports, the accounts of 2,000 school boards, which have to be audited before presentation. Many of these accounts are not sent to us before July, and the publication of the whole Report is in consequence delayed. I hope that the recommendations of the Statistical Committee, presided over by the right hon. Member for Pontefract (Mr. Childers), will relieve us of a considerable number of statistics, in which case the Educational Report will be published earlier in the year. Last year it was in the hands of the printers on August 12; but it was not distributed till November by the Vote Office. The Statistical Return for the year is now ready, and the Annual Report we will endeavour to publish earlier in the Session than last year.

DISTRESS (IRELAND)—NEWCASTLE WEST AND LONDONDERRY.

Mr. O'DONNELL asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, If he is aware that at the first extraordinary Presentment Sessions at Newcastle West, in the county of Limerick, on Saturday last, a large number of Catholic clergymen attended to complain that, notwithstanding the extreme destitution of the people, not a single landlord had as yet made use of the facilities offered by the Government for obtaining loans to be spent in the employment of the destitute poor?

Mr. J. LOWTHER: Sir, I only got the Notice yesterday, and I have not been able to ascertain what is not clear on the face of the Question—whether the statement of the gentlemen to whom reference was made referred to applications for a loan within the Union or merely within the barony. Within the Union, as stated in *The Dublin Gazette* of Friday last, applications were made for upwards of £2,800, and subsequent applications will raise the sum to £3,300. These applications might or might not have been in the particular barony; but I am unable to say.

Mr. O'DONNELL asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to the statement of the "Derry Standard" that an owner of land in the neighbourhood of Derry, to whom a Government Grant has been made for the purpose of improvements in connection with the relief of distress, has issued the following circular to his tenantry:—

"Notice. Those tenants who wish to have improvements carried out on their holdings, either in drainage, or fencing, or in roads, are informed that, upon proper application, money will be advanced for the purpose; but the tenant must agree to one shilling for every one pound spent being added to his rent—such increased rent to commence from 1st of November 1881;"

and, whether he will take any steps to prevent other owners of land from acting in a similar manner?

MR. J. LOWTHER: Sir, I have not seen the statement to which the hon. Gentleman refers, and I am not inclined to verify it in any way. There is no power I am aware of, on the part of the Government, under the notice of the Board of Works, or in the provisions of the Land Improvement Act, and there certainly is no inclination to interfere in any way between landlord and tenant.

TURKEY—ANGLO-TURKISH CONVENTION (APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS) —KEAMIL PASHA.

MR. PEASE asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether it is the case that Keamil Pasha, the late Governor General of Aleppo, whose dismissal from his post was demanded by Sir Henry A. Layard in March last, has been appointed by the Porte Musteshar or Under Secretary of the Interior and President of the Commission for the appointment of Public Functionaries; and, whether Her Majesty's Government are able to make any statement or lay further Papers upon the Table relative to the action of Her Majesty's Government in respect to this appointment?

MR. BOURKE: Sir Henry Layard announced this appointment in a despatch dated November 9, which will be found at page 127, No. 121, of the Papers recently laid before Parliament (Turkey, No. 1, 1880)—

> "I learn upon good authority that this appointment has been forced upon Mahmoud Nedim Pasha, notwithstanding his strong objection to it. It is scarcely credible that a man who has been recently proved guilty of treating the Christians of Zeitoun with great cruelty, and who is under the accusation of having received bribes, and of having forged or connived at the forgery of letters in order to misrepresent the conduct of one of Her Majesty's Consuls, should be named to a place of so much importance, which ought to be filled by a man of known integrity and of liberal views."

The Porte is, doubtless, perfectly well aware of the impression that such an appointment would make in Europe; and, under these circumstances, it is perfectly unnecessary to make any representation to them on the subject.

BOARD OF WORKS (IRELAND)—CLARE CASTLE HARBOUR AND PIER.

MR. FINIGAN asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Why the sum of two thousand pounds, sanctioned by the Treasury in November last as a loan for the repair of the Clare Castle Harbour and Pier, has not in any part been expended thereupon; and, whether he will communicate with the Irish Board of Works with a view to their proceeding with the work sanctioned by the Treasury?

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON: Sir, if the hon. Gentleman will allow me, I will answer the Question. The reason why no part of the £2,000 was expended on Clare Castle Harbour and Pier is, that before beginning the works it was necessary to make a careful survey. This has now been done; but some little delay is still unavoidable, as the engineer to the Board of Works must personally visit the place in order to complete the plans. He has been directed to proceed to Clare Castle as soon as he can.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—EMYVALE.

MR. SULLIVAN asked the Postmaster General, If he will lay upon the Table of the House Copies of all Correspondence relating to the appointment to a recent vacancy in the Postmistressship of Emyvale, county Monaghan, and of all applications, memorials, and recommendations relating thereto; and, whether the Government propose henceforth to make appointments to this branch of the public service solely on the grounds of superior qualifications?

LORD JOHN MANNERS: Sir, the sub-post-office at Emyvale is not in my gift, but in that of the Treasury. The Treasury having failed to make any appointment, it was necessary the Post Office should do so; and, after making the proper inquiries, the Surveyor appointed Mr. Geddes. There is nothing, so far as I know, in the Correspondence connected with the appointment to justify it being made public. With regard to the second part of the Question of the hon. and learned Gentleman, there is no intention of making any alteration in the mode of appointment.

the Imperial Family were on the point of going to dinner in the dining-room of the Winter Palace; but by an accidental, or rather, I may say, a Providential, circumstance, they were delayed, and in the few minutes of delay which arose the explosion of which we have all heard occurred. It appears to have been an explosion of dynamite, which must have been stored in a cellar two floors below the room in which they were about to dine. The effect of the explosion was to cause the deaths of nine persons, and some 40 or more have been wounded. There is no trace of gunpowder; and the circumstances rather point to the suspicion that the explosion must have been produced by some machinery, possibly clockwork. Evidently it was a carefully prepared and most diabolically wicked plot. I am thankful to be able to say that, according to the reports, neither His Majesty the Emperor nor the Duchess of Edinburgh has suffered in health; and I am also especially thankful to say that the health of the Empress of Russia, who was lying ill at the time, has not suffered, though, of course, the news of what had taken place, although she was not aware of it for the moment, must have been a very great shock to her. We have no more information that I could communicate. Indeed, we have received no information beyond that which has appeared in the newspapers, and I understand that the Russian Ambassador has no further news to communicate.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND) BILL.

(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. James Lowther, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.*)

[BILL 1.] COMMITTEE.

[*Progress 16th February.*]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 3 (Extension of power to grant out-door relief in food and fuel).

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY said, he had an Amendment to propose to this clause, the object of which was to extend the period named therein of two calendar months for administering out-door relief. The clause provided that no order of the Local Government Board should be binding on the Guardians for a period exceeding two calendar months from the date of such order. He did not think it right to limit the power to be exercised by the Local Government Board to this period of two calendar months, as it appeared to him that the matter should be left to their discretion; and, further, that there was no reason whatever for selecting this term. They were in the middle of February; and those who knew anything of the condition of Ireland would be aware that the two calendar months named in this section would not include the worst period, for that when it had expired the distress would most probably be at its height, and would be felt for a much longer period than two calendar months. Of course, there would be places where the distress was not likely to last as long, or, indeed, anything like two calendar months; but whether it did so or not, and whatever might be the action of the Local Government Board, it was almost certain that the distress, on the whole, would last for a much longer period than two months. They were bound to suppose that the distress in many places would render it necessary that the period of two calendar months would begin very soon, and there were many places in Ireland where this 3rd section ought to be in operation already, and they were, indeed, bound to consider that the two calendar months had begun, or ought to begin, at that very moment. Why should the action of the Local Government Board be confined to two calendar months? The effect of this limitation would be, that the Board of Guardians would infallibly make their provision in accordance with the order. They would elect their officers and arrange their depôts for the two months; and it was certain, at the end of that time, any order given by the Local Government Board with respect to any really distressed district would have to be renewed, and in all probability the Board of Guardians would find itself at the end of its organization, and would be obliged to re-organize. He could not see any danger in allowing the Local Government Board a larger discretion than the clause gave it; and he thought that the Government were not treating the Board with sufficient confidence. They seemed to have forgotten that they had in that Board a very powerful organization—or, perhaps, they did not wish to cast too much work upon it. At any rate, they were certainly not availing themselves sufficiently of its powers. As there was no reason whatever why the Local Government Board should not have power of extending the period of two calendar months, he begged to move, from line 24, page 1, the omission of the words, "not exceeding two calendar months."

Amendment *moved,* in page 1, line 24, to leave out "not exceeding two calendar months."—(*Mr. O'Shaughnessy.*)

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. GIBSON) said, that the provisions of the clause had been framed with great care in order to allow ample discretion to the Local Government Board, who were themselves thoroughly satisfied with the clause as it stood. It would, of course, be their duty, when this period of two months had expired, to look into the machinery in operation under the Poor Law Guardians, and then consider and decide whether it was right that the term should be renewed. There was nothing to prevent the Local Government Board from doing this, inasmuch as the words of the section were—

> "The Local Government Board may, from time to time, if and so far as they think fit, authorize by order," &c.

And, further, they might, by the terms of the section, before the 31st of December, 1880, make an order which would be available for two months of the following year. That was as wide a power as the Local Government Board were desirous to have, and he did not think it well to extend it.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY said, that if the Amendment were accepted, the Local Government Board would be able to make their own terms; and the effect would be that they might order the distribution of relief for, say, four months, if necessary.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE said, the clause appeared to him to be badly drawn; and pointed out that if the wording remained the same, instead of the period being fixed for the 1st of March, 1881, the period of giving outdoor relief would be limited to the 31st of December. He did not think the term of two months was a wise one.

MR. SYNAN said, the hon. Member for Reading (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) had fallen into a great mistake with regard to the two months to which he had referred—namely, the period between the 31st of December, 1880, and the 1st of March, 1881. This had nothing whatever to do with the present Amendment, but had been introduced into the clause for the purpose of enabling Parliament to deal with the question in March. The object of his hon. Friend the Member for Limerick (Mr. O'Shaughnessy) was to give a certain amount of discretion to the Guardians, and he said nothing whatever about the discretion of the Local Government Board. The right hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Mr. Gibson) had asked the hon. Member, and those who supported him, what reason there was for the proposed alteration. He (Mr. Synan) would ask him the reason why he had fixed upon this period of two months? The reasons of his hon. Friends were perfectly clear. It was well known that the destitution must continue until the next harvest was got in. Under these circumstances, he could understand the reason for inserting six, but not two, months in the Bill. Again, what was the object of putting in two months and allowing the Local Government Board to renew its order over and over again? The machinery of the Guardians would go on for this period of two months, and would then have to be disturbed until the Local Government Board gave its new order. Was it proper that the local machinery of the Guardians should be interfered with or disturbed by introducing too narrow a period? If his hon. Friend succeeded in striking out the words "not exceeding two calendar months," he should himself move that a period of six months be substituted in their place, in order to enable the harvest of the present year to be got in. The Attorney General for Ireland had given no reason against the Amendment, which he hoped would be accepted by the Government.

MR. J. LOWTHER said, that the reason why the period of two months had been fixed upon was that in the course of that time it was hoped that the distress would have very much abated. He would remind the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Synan) that large sums of money had been applied for by way of loans to the

Board of Works — something like £400,000 or £500,000—but that only a limited portion of this money had up to the present been used. The period of two months was, in the opinion of the Government, ample for the Local Government Board to renew their order if they found that no improvement took place.

THE O'DONOGHUE did not think that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland had given any reason why the hon. Member for Limerick (Mr. O'Shaughnessy) should not adhere to his Amendment; neither had he given the Committee any reason which would enable them to understand why he was so very sanguine as to the abatement of the distress in Ireland. The clause was drawn evidently on the assumption that the depression would not last; but the Amendment of his hon. Friend was drawn upon the assumption that the distress would last—a view which he was sorry to say was entertained by all the Irish Members. He believed that the necessity for applying to the Local Government Board for a fresh order would cause delay, which would lead to great suffering and loss of life among the people.

MR. O'SULLIVAN asked if power existed in the Bill under which the Local Government Board could renew their order? He thought that the period named should be extended to six months.

MR. LAW presumed that the part of the section now under discussion had been copied from the 2nd clause of the Act of 1847. He thought that an absolute discretionary power might well be entrusted to the Local Government Board, of which the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland was President.

MR. HIBBERT said, he did not think that there was anything to be gained by inserting the words of the Amendment, and that the point was hardly worth discussing.

THE O'DONOGHUE thought that the proper way to deal with the matter would be to extend the time to six months, and to leave it to the discretion of the Guardians.

MR. O'CONNOR POWER said, that the view which he took with respect to this Amendment was, that his hon. Friend the Member for Limerick (Mr. O'Shaughnessy) did not like to see so many restrictions upon the action of those who were charged with the administration of relief. If they knew anything of the Irish Boards, it was that they were too slow in action in matters of this kind; indeed, the Board of Works was in Ireland the subject of a standing joke, and had been described as a Board for promoting idleness. The tendency in all those Boards was to delay and obstruct matters as much as possible. This period of two months was in itself obstructive; and in order to get rid of this obstruction the Amendment of his hon. Friend had been moved. What could be said in favour of this limit of two months, beyond that it looked well on the grounds of symmetry and antiquity? He was disposed to agree with the hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. Hibbert) that the matter was not very important; nevertheless he was opposed to this restriction of two months, because it seemed to be an encouragement to delay—the very thing which ought to be opposed in legislation of this kind.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY feared he should be obliged to press his Amendment. The only reason advanced by the President of the Irish Local Government Board was simply that from his point of view, and from information which he had received, the distress was likely to vary during the next two months. That, however, was altogether contrary to their experience of former famines in Ireland. It was contrary to their experience of the Famine of 1847, and to their experience of the minor distresses which had been felt since that time. He pointed out that within two months from the present date the distress would probably be greater than at present, and that it would thenceforward increase. The object of the Amendment was that the Local Government Board, of which the right hon. Gentleman was President, might be enabled, at their discretion, at once to make an order under which relief might be given for a period exceeding two months. The hon. Member for Limerick County (Mr. Synan) wished to give greater power to the Guardians than would be vested in them under this clause. Under the construction of the clause, however, he feared it would be impossible to enlarge their powers; but he desired to effect the next best thing to this—namely, to extend the power of the Local Government Board, and not to impose limitations which they knew by experience would only have the effect of narrowing their action during the course of this distress. He feared that the money available under the provisions of the Bill would not be forthcoming in time to meet the distress. He would lay before the Committee some evidence upon this point to show that at present it had not come in time, and that it was upon this 3rd section of the Bill that they would have to rely for the prevention of deaths from starvation. A letter had been read from Dr. Ryan before the Board of Guardians for Tipperary, which stated that whole families were actually in a state of starvation; that fever had crept into his district, and that he was then attending two cases; one young man, 21 years of age, had fallen sick of fever, that he was suffering from extreme exhaustion, and that all hope of recovery was gone; and, further, that he had no clothes upon him. Again, it was stated that months had passed since this Board had applied for money to carry out sewage works in the town. To this one of the Guardians replied —and he (Mr. O'Shaughnessy) asked the right hon. Gentleman to take it to heart—

> "If the Government do not give us this money before another week we should not have it at all."

Could anyone suppose that two calendar months would be sufficient for the Local Government Board to give its order? The effect of giving an order for compulsory relief would be that the Local Government Board must confine their operations to that period, and that when it had expired they would be obliged, at the greatest expense and trouble, to revise their organization during the period in which it might be further necessary. He was perfectly willing to adopt the suggestion of his hon. Friend the Member for Limerick County (Mr. Synan), and to substitute the term of six months for the term fixed by the clause. The proposed change would have a very limited effect; it was clear that a longer period would be necessary; and if the suggestion were adopted it would be in the power of the Local Government Board to extend their order, and so prevent the necessity of re-organizing, and the danger of disorganization of the arrangements of the Boards of Guardians, which would necessarily result in great trouble and expense as a consequence of their being limited to a period of two months.

MR. O'SULLIVAN suggested that it would be well that the Local Government Board should be empowered to continue, as well as to revoke, their orders, as provided in page 2, line 1, of the Bill; and he thought the case would be met, to a certain extent, by inserting the word "continue" after the word "purpose" in that line.

MR. BIGGAR pointed out that in the event of the first order of the Local Government Board not being complied with from negligence or any other cause, even supposing they had power of granting a fresh order, the Board of Guardians would have no power to grant out-door relief, and that a bad state of things would in consequence follow. On the other hand, if the limit of two months was removed, the order would continue in force until it was revoked by the Local Government Board, or until the Guardians thought it desirable that they should cease to give out-door relief. If the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for Limerick (Mr. O'Shaughnessy) were not accepted, fresh machinery would be required at the expiration of each succeeding two months for a renewal of powers which would involve a loss of time. He remembered, many years ago, when pressure had been brought to bear upon a public Department in Ireland under similar circumstances, that a great loss of time resulted. He would remind the Committee that the real pressure would not be felt in the two months, but in all probability during the months of June and July, when the present supply of the small farmers had been entirely consumed. If an arrangement were made, limited as to time, a renewal would clearly be required. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland had said that the Local Government Board could easily get instructions for renewal of powers to the Guardians; but, in the present distress, he (Mr. Biggar) considered such a mode most unadvisable, and likely to lead to the distress becoming more general. In short, the time ought to be extended. The best plan would be to strike out the time given to the Guardians, and to leave a discretionary power with the Local Government Board when to stop the order for relief.

Mr. J. LOWTHER said, that although the time mentioned in the clause was a period of two months, yet, at the expiration of that time, there would be no difficulty about a fresh order. He thought that the hon. and learned Member for Limerick's (Mr. O'Shaughnessy's) Amendment was not supported by a good argument, when he said "that there might be a delay between the expiration of one order and the issuing of the next." Everyone who knew anything of these matters knew that the new order would be made before the time when the old one had run out. Arrangements could easily be made for the orders to run consecutively; and he, therefore, saw no reason why the clause should be amended as proposed.

The O'DONOGHUE said, he should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down how many Inspectors were employed under the Local Government Board? He thought it was quite obvious that there would be considerable delay with reference to the orders unless a discretionary power were given to the Guardians.

Mr. J. LOWTHER said, that six Inspectors had been appointed temporarily.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said, that he disagreed with the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General and the Chief Secretary for Ireland. He failed to see how the Board could continue the orders under the terms of the clause. He thought the Committee would see that there was no such power given. He was afraid that red tapeism would be carried out to the letter. He should ask that the words "continued on" be added after the word "months" in page 1, line 20.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Gibson) said, that he thought the terms were correct as they stood.

Mr. SHAW said, that the power to be granted to the Local Government Board of issuing fresh orders might give rise to a good deal of correspondence. They were all aware that that Board had a taste for letter-writing and roundabout performance. He hoped that nothing of that kind in the administration of the relief would occur. He did not think it would be necessary for the Committee to divide on the subject.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY said, that as it was promised that arrangements should be provided for making the orders consecutive he would not press his Amendment. The limit given by the clause was too narrow; but he thought the case would be met if time were taken on each occasion before two months elapsed to make arrangements for the renewal of the order.

Mr. BIGGAR said, he did not feel disposed to act in opposition to the hon. Member for County Cork (Mr. Shaw); but it seemed to him that it was a question that should not be abandoned. Her Majesty's Government simply said that no harm could accrue from the clause being left as it stood; but they had produced no sufficient argument against the Amendment. In the next place, the most that could be said was that this order might be renewed if it was considered desirable to do so. He could not see why the order could not be made to continue in force until revoked. He concurred with the hon. Member for County Cork in thinking that a good deal of mischief would arise if there was much correspondence between the Local Government Board in Ireland and the Boards of Guardians. He thought that the clause should be amended as proposed, or the effect would, he felt sure, be disastrous.

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, that the Government had taken upon themselves the responsibility of authorizing the Boards of Guardians to give out-door relief; but there was no compulsion on the Boards of Guardians to grant it. It was at their discretion, and they might decline to do so until this Bill became law. He confessed that he objected to the Amendment. The omission of the words was not desired by the Local Government Board. The question now under discussion was one of an important character, and he trusted that the Amendment would not be acceded to by the Committee. He begged to remind the Committee that no order could be issued until the Bill passed. For the sake of those persons, therefore, who were likely to suffer from the passing of the Bill being delayed, he appealed to hon. Members to consider the clauses of the Bill with as little delay as possible.

Mr. SHAW quite agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty in desiring that the Bill should be speedily passed. There were two or three questions which would require a considerable amount of discussion; and, therefore, he did not think it advisable that the Committee should dwell at any considerable length upon the Amendment before them. The Government might rest assured that everything that could be done by Irish Members to facilitate the passing of the measure would be done.

MR. P. MARTIN said, the imputation conveyed in the speech of the First Lord of the Admiralty against the Irish Members as a body was most unfair and ill-timed. There had not been any delay by frivolous or unfair criticism on their part. In fact, the Government knew that fault was their own, and sought to throw the blame on the Irish Members. There ought to have been a special Session, or Parliament should have been convened at an earlier date. It could not be denied that the Government had been warned, so far back as last June, as to the state of affairs in Ireland. They had been warned, both by Memorials and by statements in the public Press. A Memorial was sent by Irish Members, —signed by the majority of them—to the authorities. The answer to that was a bare acknowledgment, couched in the curtest possible terms. After all the notices that the Government had received on the subject, it was for them to justify their conduct in seeking thus hurriedly to pass through the House a Bill which it was plain had been drafted without much care or consideration for the interests of Ireland. The measure was one of such importance to the people of Ireland that it both invited and demanded criticism on the part of their Representatives.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY said, that he was willing to show his desire that the measure should be rapidly proceeded with by withdrawing his Amendment. He contended that it was not accurate to say that the Local Government Board had been authorized to give orders for the distribution of out-door relief with all possible speed. He thought that the words proposed to be left out might be omitted very well, as the powers granted to the Boards of Guardians could be suspended with ease.

MR. FINIGAN said, that he wished to remind the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty that the Bill before the Committee was in the nature of an Indemnity Bill; and he would remind the Committee that in the present state of things they should do everything in their power to put down in Ireland that system of red-tapeism which was its curse. It appeared to him that the greatest possible number of officials were kept in Ireland. Those Irish officials appeared to think that the Irish people were there for their especial benefit. He trusted that the hon. and learned Member for Limerick would not withdraw his Amendment, but that he would take the opinion of the Committee on that important matter. He felt convinced that the order given to the Boards of Guardians should be a continuing one.

THE O'DONOGHUE said, that he did not think that the grounds on which the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty wished to proceed speedily with the Bill should pass unnoticed. The Local Government Board in Ireland had already received instructions, and this measure merely ratified them.

MR. BIGGAR said, the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty had taunted Irish Members with delaying the Bill, and so increasing the chance of death taking place among the people. If the right hon. Gentleman would listen to what he would say, he would see that this delay would appear to have arisen entirely from the course adopted by Her Majesty's Government. The Amendment proposed by his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Limerick was certainly a most reasonable one, and the Government had never raised the slightest argument against it. He could not agree with the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland in thinking that the clause was correct as it stood, and that the arrangement with the Local Government Board would prove satisfactory. He thought that the Amendment should be agreed to without a discussion. He thought a great deal of time would be saved if the Government would give a fair hearing to the Amendments, which were of a reasonable nature.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 20, after the word "months," to insert the words "continued on."—(*Mr. O'Sullivan.*)

MR. J. LOWTHER said, that he had already pointed out that there would be no difficulty about fresh orders being issued at the expiration of the two months; and he thought that that would be quite sufficient without the words proposed being inserted.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said, that after the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland he would withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. LAW moved, in line 8, to insert the words "proviso at the latter end," in place of the words "provisions in the latter part." He begged to point out that the portion of the Act intended to be dealt with was not the whole of the enactments forming the latter part of the section referred to, but merely the concluding Proviso.

Amendment *agreed to*; words *inserted* accordingly.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY remarked, that on the last night of Committee on the Bill they had discussed the question whether in Clause 3 they should not add the word "money" to the words "food and fuel," in which forms relief was to be given. There had been a good deal of discussion, and they had failed to obtain the insertion of the word "money." During the Famine of 1847 a system of giving relief in the form of food and fuel had been carried on with success; but there had been a very careful organization in the distribution of those kinds of relief. The object of his Amendment was that there should be an organization provided for the distribution. Such organization he felt to be absolutely necessary; and he therefore begged to move the Amendment which he had placed upon the Paper.

Amendment proposed,

In page 2, line 12, after "Act," insert "the Local Government Board shall appoint in every such order, or in a subsequent order or orders to be issued as soon as possible after such order, the place or places where depôts for food or fuel are to be established for the distribution of the same, and the number of additional relieving officers and other officials, if any, whom it shall be imperative on the guardians to appoint to aid in the distribution of such food or fuel."—(*Mr. O'Shaughnessy.*)

Mr. J. LOWTHER said, they had heard a good deal that evening about centralization and the arbitrary action of the Government with regard to the local authorities; but he would venture to point out that the duties which the hon. and learned Gentleman now proposed directly to impose upon the Local Government Board would require intimate acquaintance with local circumstances under practical knowledge, which it was impossible for the Local Government Board to exhibit as well as the Board of Guardians. The Local Government Board had not been remiss in urging on the Boards of Guardians the duties which they would have to perform; and if the hon. and learned Gentleman would refer to the Correspondence lately published, he would see, under the date of November 14th, that in a Circular issued by the Local Government Board they had insisted on the importance of making every provision for the proper relief of the people in the various districts. Since that time the Local Government Board had taken further steps with a view to urge this point on the Boards of Guardians; and he thought, in that respect, they had done all that it was possible for them to do, and that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for them to undertake to perform local details which could be much better left to the local bodies.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY asked whether any unwillingness had been shown by Boards of Guardians in carrying out their duties, to make the Circular to which the right hon. Gentleman had alluded necessary?

Mr. J. LOWTHER explained, that the Circular was issued before the Board had any power in the matter. The present Bill now in Committee gave that power.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN observed, that the Guardians had power to appoint any number of relieving officers that they might require. In order, however, that they should carry out successfully the difficult task imposed upon them, it would be necessary to have depôts both for food and fuel. People could not be expected to come distances of 10 or 20 miles to obtain relief, and therefore depôts must be established in each district.

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY said, a very difficult task, and an almost impossible one, was imposed on the Board of Guardians when they were required to maintain these districts in the West of Ireland. There were no places where these depôts could be constructed, and as the Government had insisted that relief could only be given in food and fuel a great many appliances would be required where the destitution was thickest. Even then the people would have to travel miles and miles over the mountains to get relief in kind. That seemed to him an additional reason why the determination of the Government to insist on that point should be reviewed.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY said, he would withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. BIGGAR moved an Amendment in page 2, line 14, after the word "charged" to insert the words "upon the Union at large, but otherwise." His object in this Amendment was to make it certain that the expenses of this relief were charged not upon what was called the divisional area, but upon the Union at large. He desired that the wealthy parts of the Union should not get off in comparative freedom, from the cost of these rates, while the heaviest tax was cast upon the comparatively poor parts of the Union. His Amendment was not at all of the sweeping character which it appeared to be at first sight. According to the present system of Poor Law in force in Ireland, a very large proportion of the charges in connection with the working of the system were charged on what was called the Union at large. All the house charges—the expenses for staff and officers, and other things of that kind—were charged to the Union at large, and if a pauper went into the house with no particular settlement in a particular district the expenses connected with his maintenance were also so charged; and in practice a great many cases of that kind did occur. All the in-door relief was also charged in a similar manner; but out-door relief was charged upon the electoral division. The result was that where landlords had got rid of their poor tenants by turning them out the district was comparatively free from expense for pauperism; while other parts to which the poor people were driven were subjected to a very heavy tax. As a consequence, populations verging on pauperism from one year's end to the other were made to bear a very heavy tax, while rich landlords would be put to no particular trouble and expense in connection with relief. The Bill at present proposed to charge the expenses of the relief, like the present out-door relief, on the electoral division. His Amendment proposed to give the rates a wider extent, and to charge them on the Union at large.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 14, after "charged" to insert the words "upon the union at large, but otherwise." —(*Mr Biggar.*)

MR. O'SULLIVAN trusted that his hon. Friend would not withdraw this Amendment, as so many other Amendments had been. In a national calamity like the present, the rate ought to be national also; but if they could not get it made national, it ought, at any rate, to be chargeable on the Unions. It was very unfair to make such a rate as this a divisional charge. In the Board of Guardians of which he was Vice Chairman, he inquired as to the district of which he was Guardian, and he found that there were 42 inmates charged to that division. On investigating the facts, he found that of those, six persons never belonged to that division at all, but had come to live there quite recently, and after living there two years, becoming paupers, were consequently chargeable. Three or four of them had come from England, where they had spent the best days of their life, and after exhausting the few pounds they brought with them, had become chargeable to a division to which they had never contributed one penny of rates. Seventeen more of these people belonged to country districts, where the houses had been levelled by the landlords, and the tenants had consequently been driven into the little towns to take lodgings; so that, in reality, out of 42 persons charged to his division there were only 19 who actually belonged to it. There was a great deal more in this question of Union rating than the Government seemed to think. He wished they would bear in mind the amount of crime which was caused by parties being huddled together in low lodging-houses —a practice which the enforcement of Union rating would do more than anything else to discourage. Nothing, indeed, had done so much harm as these divisional charges. If they had Union rating they would not have houses thrown down by the landlords, and the occupants turned into poorer divisions. In fact, if the present clause were allowed to pass unamended, the poorer the division the worse the distress in it would be. He hoped the Government would see their way to accept the Amendment.

Major O'BEIRNE also hoped the Government would see their way to accept the Amendment, because he could say from personal knowledge of his own county that if this rate was charged on the divisional area there would be several districts which would almost entirely escape from the rate, while some others would have to pay a very heavy one indeed. In some electoral divisions, for instance, the rate would be about 1*s.* 10*d.*, while in others it would be 3*s.* 10*d.*, or 5*s.*, or more. The only proper way was to divide the cost in the Unions.

Mr. J. LOWTHER observed, that the Government were not now proposing to assimilate the Poor Law, or to alter it in any way, but simply to pass a temporary Act in order to meet an extraordinary emergency. Everyone who had studied this question at all knew that the subject of Union rating was one which gave rise to very considerable difference of opinion, and he did not think it was one which they ought to enter on in regard to this Bill. He hoped the Committee would avoid being led into a discussion on extraneous topics. All the Government proposed to do was simply to maintain the existing state of things with regard to out-door relief as it stood. Out-door relief, whether rightly or wrongly, was now charged in a certain manner; and whatever the views of hon. Gentlemen might be as to the propriety of an alteration in the law at a future time, he hoped they would not introduce that vexed topic then.

Mr. LAW observed, that he was disposed to agree with the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down as to the undesirability of entering, on this occasion, upon the vexed question of Union rating; but, at the same time, he wished the Committee to know what was the exact effect of the Bill as it stood, and of the Amendment now proposed. In preparing the Bill, the Government might have taken as their method of charging the expenses to be incurred, either the system of charging in-door relief, or the system of charging out-door relief. Well, they had — for reasons which he was sure they thought right — taken the system of out-door relief. Now, out-door relief, as he understood it, was charged only on the divisional areas; whilst, as the result of a compromise arrived at after the Report of the Union Rating Committee of 1876, when the right hon. Baronet the Colonial Secretary (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) was Chief Secretary for Ireland, in-door relief was, in the first instance, charged, as before, on the electoral division, until it reached a certain sum; but when that limit was passed, then it was charged upon the Union at large. If he might anticipate the discussion of a subsequent Amendment, it did appear to him that there was another proposal which met the requirements of the case, and that was the Amendment of his hon. Friend the Member for the County of Cork (Mr. Shaw), which sought to strike out the word "out-door," and substitute the word "in-door;" the effect of which would be to give heavily-taxed electoral divisions the benefit of a general Union rate whenever their charge exceeded a certain amount. It must be expected that in some electoral divisions where the distress was severe the charge imposed on those who paid the rate would be so heavy that they would, in fact, not be much better off than those who received relief. It would be, therefore, in his opinion, desirable to take as the standard of charge not the out-door relief, but the in-door relief system.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN remarked, that they had just been told that this was a temporary measure in which they ought not to introduce the question of Union rating; but he would venture to remind the right hon. Gentleman that baronial sessions were also a new and temporary expedient, and yet he had not introduced the divisional rating there. There he had introduced a system by which half was paid by the occupier and half by the landlord. That was a new proposal. Why did not he put the whole charge upon the landlords as before? If they charged these rates on the electoral divisions they would have to be paid by the poorest classes and the poorest divisions, while those who exterminated their tenantry would have no charge at all.

Mr. SHAW observed, that he did not mind how the question was raised—whether on his Amendment, or on the proposal now before the Committee. It must be discussed in some way or another, for it was a very important question, and one on which he hoped the Government would be able to give way. If they did not, the result would be absolutely ruinous to some of the poorer districts. He believed every practical man who had considered this question agreed that the charge should be thrown upon the Unions; and, therefore, he hoped the Government would be able to see their way to accept the Amendment.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY said, everyone acquainted with the condition of things in Ireland must be aware that the electoral system would certainly break down. If those districts were compelled to provide relief out of their own rates, they would, practically, be reduced to a state of perpetual starvation. The question then was how that difficulty could be met, and Union rating was suggested by one Amendment as a solution. It must be borne in mind that the system of Union rating had never been applied to out-door relief. There were certain disadvantages in so applying it. For instance, they might have a Union in which there was a large town in which a great deal of out-door relief would be required and a great deal of money expended. During the next few months that charge would be very largely increased. The people who flowed into the town would not come merely from the districts immediately around it, but also from the neighbouring Unions. Now, why should the rural districts immediately around the town be made to bear all the extra burden of that relief, while the districts in other Unions that had contributed a large number of the persons applying for relief should get off scot free? That would be most unfair, for it would throw the heaviest burden on the districts immediately surrounding the town. The real remedy, in his opinion, was something in the nature of a national rate. He had consequently suggested an Amendment by which out-door relief given under this clause should be raised by a national rate falling equally on all parts of Ireland, and on all property in Ireland. The effect would be, the districts which had not suffered, and would not suffer from distress, would have to contribute towards the assistance of districts who would have to expend a great deal of money for the relief of the poor under this section. There was no reason in the world why persons remote from a town or district which was suffering from distress should not bear a proportion of the cost just as much as people near it. The Amendments of which his hon. Friends had given Notice all endeavoured to shift the burden under this section from the electoral division, and he supposed would all meet the fate of other Amendments, and be rejected. He was perfectly prepared for that; but when the accounts of this distress came to be made up it would be found absolutely necessary to abandon the principle of electoral rating, and to spread some portion of the money expended in the relief of distress elsewhere. When that time came the present principle would have to be abandoned, and they would have to make choice of some other modes of distributing the fund. Then he believed it would be found that the principle of a national rate was the only one by which they could fairly meet this extraordinary burden.

MR. SYNAN hoped the Government would consider the Amendment of his hon. Friend (Mr. Shaw); but he hardly thought that was the time in which to raise a question of such magnitude as that of national rates. If the Government, however, would charge these rates on the in-door relief system instead of the out-door relief system, they would do much to facilitate the carrying out of this clause.

MR. J. LOWTHER said, the Government were willing to adopt the suggestion, and would take that course.

MR. BIGGAR said, as the Government practically agreed to what he said, he would beg leave to withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. SHAW, remarking that he had not the least wish to make a speech, formally moved, at page 2, line 15, to leave out the word "out-door," in order to insert the word "in-door."

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY observed, that he should not divide the Committee on his Amendment; but, at the same time, he wished to point out that the only fair way to meet this exceptional necessity was by a rate charged upon all property rateable to the relief of the poor in Ireland. If that principle were not recognized now, he was certain it would have to be recognized by the time the famine and the distress were over. The only effect of the course now pursued by the Government would be that it would presently become absolutely necessary to meet the distress in the impoverished rural districts by a grant from the Imperial Exchequer. The Government had now made it impossible for them to recede from the position they had taken up, and the result would be to force them hereafter to make these grants.

Amendment *agreed to.*

Mr. SHAW, who had given Notice to move the following Amendment:—In page 2, line 15, at end, add—

"Any board of guardians, with the consent of the Local Government Board, shall have power to execute by means of any loan under this Act any of the following works:—

"To acquire, drain, lay out, or otherwise improve, any waste land in their district;

"To widen, deepen, embank, or straighten, any river or stream, and also to enter into any agreement respecting the execution of any such work, or the apportionment of the cost thereof with any person or authority interested in such land, river, or stream, or any property adjoining thereto, or likely to be benefited thereby;

"To agree with the owner or occupier of any land in their district, or other parties interested, to make or repair any road, earthwork, or bridge for railway or tramway, or to execute any work of drainage or private improvement in or on such lands at the expense of the owner, occupier, or parties interested, and may allow time for the repayment of the amount expended, and to receive the same by annual instalments extending over a period not exceeding thirty-five years, at such rate of interest as may be agreed on, all such works to be executed under an engineer appointed by the Board of Works;"

said, he looked upon the Amendment which he had to propose as one of very great importance, meaning, as it did in effect, that the Guardians, when spending money in the administration of relief, should get something like value for the money which they expended, and should lay the foundations of future prosperity for the country instead of distress. A proposition was made in the year 1863, with a view to the relief of the distress then existing in Lancashire, and he saw no reason why a somewhat similar course should not be followed in the present instance. At that time a Commission was sent down to Lancashire to make inquiries as the requirements of the district, and to ascertain whether any reproductive works could be undertaken by means of which the unemployed artizans could be engaged in work that would enable them to maintain themselves, and, at the same time, do good to the community at large. It was found that works of that kind were possible in several of the Lancashire towns, and in this way much of the distress was relieved. The words of his Amendment were copied almost verbatim from the Lancashire Act passed in the year of which he had spoken. It was well known that, as matters of fact, the Boards of Guardians undertook very large works at the present time. In the county which he represented, one or two presentment sessions had been held, and the works which those sessions had suggested should be at once undertaken, for although they would be of no ultimate utility, they would give present employment to the people. The object of his Amendment was to give powers to Boards of Guardians to employ destitute poor in doing work which would prove really useful. The existing Boards of Guardians were composed of gentlemen of experience, one half of them being landlords, and the other half elected members, principally tenant farmers; and he might say that, in his opinion, no Boards could possibly attend better to their duties, or look more carefully after the expenditure of the money, which it was their duty to collect from the ratepayers and disburse in the relief of the poor. It would follow, of course, that the Local Government Board would have a veto, in the event of his Amendment forming part of the Act, upon anything the Boards proposed to do. In many districts the rivers might be usefully deepened; and if this were done, not only would the rivers be cleansed and improved, but the drainage of the adjoining lands would be facilitated. Earthworks for railways and tramways might also be very usefully undertaken. In the South and West of Ireland fish was of nominal value, because there existed no means of conveying it into the interior of the country where it would find a profitable market, and railways that would serve to establish the much-needed means of communication could be made at a cost of about £4,000 per mile. Why, therefore, he asked, should not Boards of Guardians be empowered to agree with Railway Companies to make earthworks for the necessary extensions, leaving the Companies to lay down the rails and complete the lines, the Guardians accepting, as a means of re-imbursing them for their outlay, a first charge on the completed lines? In this way the first elements of prosperity and civilization could be introduced into many parts of Ireland. All that he asked was simply that they should be enabled to use their own money. At all events, let the matter be looked into and tested as a matter of business, and if the Government did not find that on these lines the proposal was safe and sound let them refuse to sanction it; but if it was found to be sound and safe let the application of the money be sanctioned. He also thought the Boards of Guardians ought to have conferred upon them powers to contract with private persons to drain lands, where those persons were owners or occupiers. This would be one of the best possible ways of occupying the destitute poor, because the owners and occupiers would find that the money spent on their own land would bring a tenfold return. Any proprietor would, of course, have the option of deciding that he would not have his land improved in the way he suggested, and if he assented the money could be laid out on the security of the land itself. As matters now stood, he was afraid that the execution of useless works would help to produce future famines by decreasing instead of increasing the cultivation of land; whereas, if such works as he proposed could be undertaken, the employment of the people on their own land would largely contribute to their future prosperity. He wished to make some alterations in the Amendment as it stood on the Paper; and he would, therefore, at present only move the first part of it, which was in the following words:—In page 2, line 15, at the end of the Clause, to add the words—

> "Any board of guardians, with the consent of the Local Government Board, shall have power to execute, by means of any loan under this Act, any of the following works."

If the principle of the Amendment was adopted, he should then propose other Amendment or Amendments specifying in detail the works which he proposed should be undertaken.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 2, line 15, at the end of the Clause, to add the words "Any board of guardians, with the consent of the Local Government Board, shall have power to execute, by means of any loan under this Act, any of the following works."—(*Mr. Shaw.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR. LAW hoped Her Majesty's Government would substantially accept the Amendment, even though they might not be able to adopt, in its present form, the proposition which the hon. Member for Cork had placed upon the Paper. Parliament had, by its legislation within the last two years, given power to Boards of Guardians in Ireland to undertake very extensive works. They had been empowered, for example, to supply a district with water; and he believed that the expenditure they might thus incur was practically unlimited. The Lancashire Act, too, to which reference had been made, enabled the local authorities there to employ labour on a variety of substantial works; and he would add that in Ireland no works could, in his opinion, be more desirable than those which were contemplated by the Amendment of the hon. Member.

MR. O'SULLIVAN hoped that Her Majesty's Government would not refuse to accept the Amendment which had been proposed. Although workhouses in Ireland were styled "work" houses, it would be much more correct to call them "idle" houses. If the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork were adopted it would put into the hands of the Guardians a power, by means of which Irish paupers in workhouses might be made self-supporting. The consent of the Local Government Board would be a sufficient safeguard against abuse of the powers which would be given in the Act under the Amendment which had been proposed.

MR. MACARTNEY thought it would be extremely dangerous to give to Boards of Guardians powers such as would be included in the Amendment of the hon. Member. He would like, for instance, to ask whether, in regard to the proposal referring to the acquisition of waste lands, such acquisition was to be with or without the consent of the owners?

MR. SHAW said, he did not intend to ask the assent of the Committee to that part of his Amendment.

MR. MACARTNEY, resuming, said, that Railway and Tramway Companies were themselves compelled to repair roads and bridges situate on, or forming part of, their respective undertakings; and he therefore failed to see what good could arise from such part of the hon. Member's proposal as had referred to that question. If the Boards of Guardians were to be empowered to do any works at all in which the labour of the paupers was to be employed, such works ought to be of a kind which could be quickly finished, so that no permanent charge would be thrown on the ratepayers.

Mr. HIBBERT, in supporting the Amendment, urged that the Boards of Guardians should not be allowed to undertake works until full and proper inquiries had been made. In the time of the Lancashire distress, plans of the works proposed to be done had to be made; in addition to which an estimate of the cost had to be prepared, and an inquiry conducted by Mr. Rawlinson, who was appointed for that purpose. In 1863, which was the second year of the distress, an Act was passed enabling local boards, municipal authorities, and Guardians of the poor, to carry out many kinds of works, and there was no more satisfactory feature in connection with the relief in Lancashire than the way in which those works were executed —a fact to which not only Mr. Rawlinson, but other inquirers testified. He therefore asked the Committee and the House, why they would not put the same confidence in the Boards of Guardians in Ireland that in 1863 was reposed in the Boards of Guardians and other local authorities in the county of Lancaster? There were on the Boards both *ex-officio* and elected Guardians, and the *ex-officio* members of the Boards would be able to give their opinions in respect to any proposals which might be brought before them. He did not see that the landowners need have any fears as to the works, and, after all, the proposal was a permissive one. As time went on it would be found better to have more than one mode of affording relief. By allowing occupiers to carry on works only with consent of the owners every reasonable objection was removed.

Mr. KAVANAGH said, it might be useful to give the Boards of Guardians the power proposed; but he feared that the object was one of so much importance it could not be properly discussed in less than a fortnight. He would therefore suggest that the proposals contained in the full text of the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork should be embodied in another Bill. As far as the spirit of the Amendment was concerned, he agreed with it, for the reason that it would confer useful powers on Boards of Guardians.

Major NOLAN remarked, that the arguments against the Amendment had been urged as though it was now for the first time proposed to make grants to public bodies, whereas the Amendment only proposed an alternative way of lending money, which he, for one, decidedly preferred. The Poor Law Unions were in every way the bodies most competent to administer the money. They were much more likely to be inspired with the wish to devote the money to the relief of the poor than the baronial sessions, which consisted solely of landed proprietors acting in their capacity of landed proprietors. The money which was to be advanced at 1 per cent for the relief of the distress ought to be disposed of in the best possible way. The money which would be granted to landlords for improving their properties would do a greal deal of good, and no doubt a large amount of works would be executed. But the proprietors who would undertake the works would, in all probability, be those who made the best landlords, and on whose estates the distress was least. Under those circumstances, it was clear that the maximum amount of good would not be done with the money, and, in all probability, the works would not be established in the places where they were most required. On the other hand, if the Poor Law Guardians were permitted to undertake drainage or relief works, they would be much more likely to pick out parts of the country where the maximum benefit might be derived from the employment of labour. If money were to be lent at 1 per cent for the relief of the poor, it would be much the better course to allow it to be used by the Poor Law Guardians in the employment of labour. He did not wish to be understood as in any way objecting to money being lent to the landlords at 1 per cent; but he thought that they were *à fortiori* bound also to lend to the Poor Law Unions. It was proposed by the Bill to lend money to another body—the baronial sessions. In common with many people, he considered Poor Law Unions much better bodies to administer these funds than the baronial sessions. If the composition of the baronial sessions were looked at, it would be seen that they could hardly have a worse system than the present of appointing to the associated sessions. Half of the sessions was composed of the magistrates, and the other half was appointed by the Grand Jury; but the members so appointed really interfered with the action of the magistrates. On the other hand, the Guardians were elected by the ratepayers under a tolerably fair system. Half were elected, and half were representatives of property, and the magistrates and the Guardians were accustomed to work well together. A worse body to administer this matter than the sessions he did not know; though if it were proposed to leave the whole power to the magistrates—which, he thought, would be an unfair thing—then, probably, the best way would be to leave it to the sessions. Moreover, the Guardians were accustomed to sit once a-week, while the sessions only came together once in three months. Then, with respect to the class of work which could be undertaken, he believed that the baronial sessions had no power to execute any road which would cost more than £200. It was almost impossible to make a road with £200, if the roads made were to be of any use. The roads which would be made would not be an investment of capital; they would simply be made as a means of employing labour. The only thing that could be said in favour of the roads that might be executed under the powers of the Bill, therefore, would be that they would do no harm, and might possibly do some good. On the contrary, if they lent money to the Poor Law Guardians, they might make roads which would be of use, and also construct other useful works. The Poor Law Boards could do many things which the baronial sessions could not. Drainage works could be executed, and earthworks for railways might also be constructed by them. Not only were the Poor Law Unions better constituted bodies, but, as he had shown, they would be able to undertake a class of work of a much superior and more useful character than the magistrates sitting in baronial sessions could do. He should like to point out to the Government the advantage which would accrue by means of the construction of earthworks for railways by the Poor Law Unions. Recently a railway had been devised, partly in his own county and partly in Mayo. With hardly an exception, the landowners consented to the scheme, and the Guardians of the Poor Law Union of Tuam and Claremorris passed resolutions expressing their willingness to guarantee the Government any money that might be advanced for the construction of the line at 1 per cent interest. Thus they had two Poor Law Boards in Ireland in advance of the deliberations of that House, proposing to guarantee out of their own funds the money lent for works such as those sketched out in the Amendment. If the Amendment were carried the Guardians would not be able to make whole railways; but they could make earthworks for them, and thus lead to the construction of the line. A most practical way would be opened by the adoption of the Amendment to develop railways in Ireland. Taking all these circumstances into consideration, he thought that the Committee should pass the Amendment, and permit the Guardians to undertake the works in question.

MR. J. LOWTHER wished to point out, with respect to the observations of the hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. Hibbert), that the cases of Lancashire and Ireland were not precisely similar. In Lancashire, during the distress, the only means of obtaining money for improvements had been by application to the Boards of Guardians or to the Local Government Board. But in Ireland the Land Improvement Act afforded the means for landowners to obtain money at 1 per cent for the improvement of their property. In the case of Lancashire, no such power existed, and the owners of property could only borrow money in the manner he had stated. The great bulk of the works which were provided for by the Lancashire Act could be done by Boards of Guardians in Ireland under the Land Improvement Act, and without any Amendment such as was now proposed. Boards of Guardians in Ireland in the capacity of the local sanitary authority could construct reservoirs and do many other works which in Lancashire had to be executed under a special Act of Parliament. Some hon. Members had suggested that Boards of Guardians should be authorized to execute such works as making railways involving the expenditure of a considerable amount of capital. Having fully considered the question, rightly or wrongly, Her Majesty's Government had come to the conclusion that the baronial presentment sessions were the proper local authority to be charged with works upon roads. The baronial sessions being, at the present moment, by Act of Parlialiament the road authority, the Government had thought that they were the proper persons to undertake all works upon roads. The hon. Member had proposed that Boards of Guardians should, in certain circumstances, make or repair "any road, earthwork, or bridge for railway or tramway." He was thus introducing a rival road authority—whether rightly or wrongly, he would not express an opinion. But he must point out that, at the present moment, the Government—subject, of course, to the approval of Parliament—stood committed to advance money to the baronial sessions. As this Bill had not been taken up by the House as a matter of extreme urgency, as the Government had hoped it would have been, the Government had been obliged to go outside the law, and, in the anticipation of the extreme distress, had taken the initiatory steps to commit themselves to the possible expenditure of considerable sums of money through the medium of the baronial sessions. Of course, the specific amount had not been determined upon, nor was the Government committed to the schemes of the sessions until the same were approved; but they had constituted the baronial sessions as the proper authority to carry out works in cases where the landowners, after application by the sanitary authority, had failed to supply an adequate amount of labour. A good deal had been said with regard to relief works, and some hon. Members had expressed opinions as to out-door relief quite opposed to those of other hon. Members; but it should be remembered that the Government had committed itself to an expenditure of £750,000, or something like £600,000, for advances to landowners and sanitary authorities; and, failing them, in exceptional cases to baronial sessions; and they were now asked to sanction another scheme for relief works under the authority of the Boards of Guardians. The Boards of Guardians in Ireland had already their hands perfectly full. The Local Government Board had never ceased to urge upon them the duty of carrying out the Poor Law. To ask them to embark in what might be a reckless competition with the baronial sessions in carrying out public works, and with private landowners in the improvement of land, would not conduce to the efficient discharge of their duties, and would be productive of positive harm.

Mr. SYNAN, while admitting that the Amendment itself required some slight amendment, did not think the argument of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland was an answer to the proposition before the Committee, or to the arguments which had been advanced in its support. What were the reasons which the right hon. Gentleman had given for not adopting the Amendment? He had neither made easy the complicated character of the Amendment, or the complicated character of the works. He had stated that Lancashire was not an analogous case, because in Lancashire the proprietors could only make drainage works through the medium of the Boards of Guardians. He did not know that that statement was quite correct, for he believed that even in England the proprietors had power to execute arterial drainage works with the aid of public money. The right hon. Gentleman had also said that the Government had committed themselves to the baronial presentment sessions, and that they could not, therefore, at that stage of the Bill, change the system they had adopted, and sanction the scheme proposed in the Amendment, and which hon. Members from Ireland believed to be a proper, good, and reproductive scheme. The Government had adopted a system which, up to the present time, had been admitted to be the most mischievous and most demoralizing that had ever been known. And because they had adopted that system, they refused to allow the allow the alternative proposition by which Boards of Guardians would be enabled to undertake reproductive public works. He should also like to know what authority the right hon. Gentleman had for stating to the Committee that the baronial presentment sessions could execute roads or earthworks for railways or tramways? For his part, he knew of no such authority. He was aware that the baronial sessions could make useless roads, and could refuse to do works which were required. In some parts of the country the baronial sessions had done some of the most useless and mischievous works. He should like to know to what portion of the Amendment the Government principally objected? If the Government would consent to the money of the ratepayers being expended in useful works by the Guardians, and not the wasteful outlay by the presentment sessions, the Amendment could be modified to meet their views. He did not wish to occupy the attention of the Committee at any great length; but he must remind them of the works that might be undertaken by the sanitary authorities in Ireland under the Amendment of his hon. Friend. With the consent of the proprietors—and nothing could be done without that—the Amendment would permit useful systems of arterial drainage to undertaken by the rural sanitary authorities. No better body than the Board of Guardians could be selected to carry out such works. If the Amendment was not passed, the works to be executed would be confined to such as the baronial sessions had power to make, and thus a permanent charge would be laid upon the people for utterly useless works. He felt sure that the principle of the Amendment was sound; and if the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland would specify his objection to its form it could be altered, and they would be certain that works could be executed under the Bill which would be of permanent benefit to the country.

MAJOR O'BEIRNE protested against this intention of the Government to encourage baronial presentment sessions. The effect of them was only to demoralize the people, because they knew perfectly well how to sham labour. This Amendment was a very good one, because it put it in the power of Guardians to carry out works of no great expense and of considerable variety—works, in fact, which might include almost anything. He should heartily support the Amendment.

MR. BRUEN fully concurred in the Amendment, for its object was rather to encourage the relief of the people by reproductive works than by giving them relief in the form either of money or food. If that were the spirit of the Amendment he heartily concurred in it; but when he came to look into the practical details of the working he must say he was sorry not to be able to fully concur in the way in which it was put. The Boards of Guardians, by the Amendment, were to have power to do certain works; but when they came to analyze the different works proposed the result seemed to him unsatisfactory. The Guardians would have the power first to acquire, drain, lay out, or otherwise improve waste land. That proposal, as he understood, was abandoned; and, therefore, he would say nothing more about it. The second gave them power to deepen and straighten rivers; the third to apply labour to the repair or the construction of railways or tramways, and purposes connected therewith; and the fourth to enable them to execute any works of drainage or further improvement at the expense of the owners. As far as he could see, the only practical part of the Amendment was that contained in the 4th and last section. There were already powers under existing Acts of Parliament which enabled persons to deepen or straighten rivers and streams; but the necessary protection of the interests of those who had property in the banks and the certain notices and formalities which had to be gone through would render it impossible to execute any of these works immediately; and without such notices and formalities great injustice might be done to existing interests. He did not think they could much shorten or simplify the machinery for carrying out this work beyond the powers given by the present law; and, therefore, he imagined that the giving of this power to Boards of Guardians would be simply to give them a power which already existed. The next clause enabling Boards of Guardians to carry out works in connection with railways and tramways certainly had a very plausible aspect; but he should like to hear whether the persons interested in the construction of such works would care or be likely to intrust the Board of Guardians with the carrying out of such work, which required great care and special skill, and needed also the application of a very stringent law or contract? He knew that there was a great difficulty in obtaining contractors for this work; and he did not quite see how the Boards of Guardians could expect to take the place of men who were accustomed to the work and had machinery and persons skilled in it ready to their hand. Tramways were very useful, and were less expensive and complicated than railways; but still he imagined that tramway authorities would not be likely to intrust the making of their roads to Boards of Guardians. The 4th clause proposed to intrust to Guardians works of drainage and private improvements on the property of owners. He must say that such works as those came quite within the compass of Boards of Guardians, and might be usefully undertaken by them with the consent of owners and other parties concerned. Whether it would conduce to the object in view to give them power to borrow money he could not say; but as owners of property had already power to borrow money, it seemed to him doubtful whether the owners would be willing to leave the execution of the works to Boards of Guardians. Thus, when they came to contest by practical analysis the working of this Amendment, it did seem to him not to offer any very wide field for useful exercise. He was inclined to agree with his hon. Colleague (Mr. Kavanagh), that the Amendment would scarcely do as it stood, and to amend it thoroughly would take a very long time. He would, therefore, suggest to the hon. Member that he should withdraw the Amendment and bring it up as a new clause, in such a working shape as would be acceptable to all. He wished to know, further, whether this power was to be conferred on Boards of Guardians for all time? He thought it ought to be merely an exceptional power; but as it now stood there was no limit of time to it. He could not allow the opportunity to pass without saying a word as to the very severe language applied to the presentment sessions. The system, no doubt, had been subject to abuse, but it had stood the test of a number of years; it had covered Ireland with useful works, and he believed experience and investigation would show that it was a very useful system. When the same men who composed it were sitting as another tribunal they were held up as the best possible body that could be obtained; and he could not understand, therefore, how, when sitting as presentment sessions, they could be so bad.

Mr. CHILDERS said, he would not follow the hon. Member into discussing the merits of presentment sessions, because he had always understood that all parties were agreed that nothing more anomalous and unsatisfactory than those sessions could possibly be. It was admitted, he thought, on all hands, that they were one of the first institutions in Ireland requiring reform; and therefore the speech of the hon. Member might be regarded as the last dying speech in support of those bodies. He would rather go back to the question immediately before them—which was, whether there should be temporary provitions during the present distress for the employment of the people at wages, as well for money or food grants. The proposal was that the Boards of Guardians should have power to employ persons to improve the estates of private owners, they being liable to repay the money so expended. There was a very good precedent for that proposal in the working of the Lancashire Famine Fund. It was said that this proposal, if carried, would necessitate the re-modelling of the whole Bill; but he did not think that was at all the case, and he undertook to say that the Irish Attorney General by the next day could easily draw the four or five clauses necessary. It was quite true that they had the Lands Improvement Act; but then these were works for which that Act, dealing as it did with large estates, was not suitable. In Ireland, a very large proportion of the people were peasants, holding very small farms; and the works proposed in this Amendment were just the kind of works which were best carried out under the administration of a local body. He thought it was very fair and reasonable that this proposition should be tried, especially as the proposition of the hon. Gentleman was a most moderate one.

Mr. ERRINGTON regretted that the Chief Secretary could not hold out a hope that he would accept this Amendment in some shape, as he was quite sure his hon. Friend (Mr. Shaw) would have been willing, if his principle had been accepted, even to have left its exact form to be carried out in another short Bill. The Chief Secretary was, no doubt, right in saying that the point at issue was between the Boards of Guardians and the baronial presentment sessions. He also observed that the Government, having considered that subject very fully, could not agree at that moment to reverse their determination. They did not ask the Government to entirely alter their determination. His own feeling was exceedingly strong against the introduction of presentment sessions; and his belief was that the argument used against the Board of Guardians applied with a great deal more force against the presentment sessions, for they were exceedingly cumbrous bodies, and very inconvenient to set in motion. They would certainly not work in every case harmoniously with the ordinary road sessions. But what he proposed was, not to enable the Boards of Guardians to give relief without labour, but to enable them to obtain some value for the labour at their disposal; and, so far from increasing their responsible powers, it seemed to him merely to give them an opportunity of acting in a much more useful way. In many cases, in fact, the Boards of Guardians were exactly the same as the sanitary boards, to which certain powers had already been intrusted; such, for instance, as sewerage. In reality, therefore, so far from increasing the amount of money to be expended in relief, he believed the result of the Amendment would be to effect a great saving. While the work to be done by the presentment sessions would not have any perceptible effect on the amount of relief to be given, he believed that any employment given by the Unions themselves in reproductive works would go a long way towards diminishing the necessity for relief. He therefore hoped that the Government would not force them to a division, but would accept the principle laid down in the Amendment, and presently move a new clause to carry it into effect.

Mr. O'CLERY supported the Amendment of his hon. Friend the Member for Cork. He would much prefer that the Local Government Board should have power to give work to every man for fair wages in Ireland rather than that indiscriminate relief should be given, because that would tend more to the preservation of self-respect among the people. He thought that it was manifest that if the Local Government Board had enjoyed this power now proposed to be given to them, such as for the drainage of lands in their respective Unions, there would not have been heard such a cry of distress as now sounded throughout the land. He was obliged to say, with regard to the question generally of outdoor relief under the proposed system, that the more the people saw of it the less they liked it; and he trusted that if the Bill was to do any good, the Committee would endeavour, by the adoption of some such an Amendment as was then before them, to devise some plan whereby the people might be employed and their self-respect maintained. It had been remarked from time to time in course of the discussion upon the measure, that hon. Members on his side of the House who proposed Amendments were thereby delaying the progress of the Bill, and in some way or other delaying the granting of relief to distressed people in some parts of Ireland. But that was not the case, inasmuch as the Bill was merely one of indemnity for powers said to have been given to local bodies within the last three months; and, therefore, any action which hon. Members from Ireland thought it right to take for the purpose of shaping the measure could not be said in any way to be keeping back relief, which, as a matter of fact, would seem to have been given by Her Majesty's Government for some months past. He hoped the Chief Secretary for Ireland would, therefore, see his way to adopt the principle of the Amendment which was then before the Committee. The first part of this Amendment had been dropped by the hon. Member for Cork because it was embodied in a Bill already before the House for the reclamation of waste lands; but the gist of the speeches which had been delivered ought, in his opinion, to be sufficient to convince the right hon. Gentleman that the Representatives of Ireland of all shades of opinion generally approved of the Amendment. He trusted that his hon. Friend would not drop the remainder of his Amendment, but that he would endeavour to force it upon the Government, because he thought that hardly any portion of the Bill, when passed, would be of greater advantage.

Mr. D. DAVIES thought it would be taken for granted that the present distress in Ireland had fallen upon the people who cultivated and lived upon the land. He believed that they had every ground for supposing that the Local Government Board would do nothing indiscreetly; but he desired to point out that the promotion of public works would have the effect of taking away men from the cultivation of the land, which would further increase the existing distress. Again, it must be borne in mind, that owing to the wet season and the scarcity of labour, the lands had become wild. It was a fact that in England they stood in need of extra labour for the purposes of cultivation, and that also was, no doubt, the case in Ireland. In England they could certainly make room for more labour than they had. Now, his experience was that if you gave 15*s.* a-day as wages on public works the men would not work for the same sum for the farmers, whose farms would consequently be neglected. He trusted that Providence had in store for the country a better harvest; but this could not be realized unless the land were properly cultivated, and it would certainly be the case that the farms would be neglected if the men were taken away to labour on public works. Such had been their experience in former times, when even the small farmers had neglected their farms for the wages to be earned on public works. He thought that as much as possible the labour should be kept on the spot and employed in the improvement of the land. He desired to impress his experience upon the Government, lest the point to which he referred should be forgotten—for it was clear that if the land were neglected the distress in Ireland would be greater next year than it had hitherto been.

Mr. O'DONNELL was surprised at the opposition of the Members of the Government, who had cheered the sentiments of the hon. Member for Cardigan (Mr. D. Davies), for the hon. Member who had just spoken had precisely expressed the principle which the supporters of the Amendment were ready to carry out. If there was one object more than another aimed at by the hon. Member for Cork, it was to keep labour employed on the land by not diverting it to those useless works which were the especial darlings of the presentment sessions. He and his hon. Friends were endeavouring to limit, as far as possible, the area of the operations of the presentment sessions, to employ labour on the land, and so prevent the consequences which had been so interestingly pointed out by the hon. Member for Cardigan. But the point which would be held to both by the English and the Irish people was that by rejecting the Amendment the Government were refusing to grant to Ireland the same facilities which had been granted in Lancashire under similar circumstances, and that there was no reason based upon anything like sound economy which could be advanced in support of their refusal to treat Ireland as a part of England was treated formerly. If they could consider that this scheme was artificially constructed so as to force all relief through the hands of the landlords, and to leave a large amount sticking to the hands of the distributors of this relief, then he could understand the object of the Government to allow no sharers in the great work which was intended to be given to the landlords alone. Except upon that ground, there was no defence of the Government policy; the character of which policy was certainly not raised by such defence, either in the view of the English or of the Irish people. As they proceeded, the Government would have to declare itself more and more expressly upon the object it had in view; but he confessed that, down to the present time, they had too much reason to think that the suspicions which were expressed at the commencement of the debate had been fully justified—that the Government policy was to force relief through the hands of one class only, who were their staunch and strong supporters. There was no real objection to this Amendment in Ireland. The members of the presentment sessions were practically the same as the members of the Boards of Guardians; and, therefore, upon the argument stated by the hon. Member for Carlow (Mr. Bruen), no personal objections to the Boards of Guardians could exist; while from every point of view he thought their action would be more beneficial, their responsibility direct, and their outlay judicious—in short, the Boards of Guardians were more reliable as bodies than the Board of Works. The debate which had been held in "another place" had brought out already that the relief works supported by the presentment sessions were the cause of jobbery, corruption, and waste to a frightful extent. They were perfectly certain that no real objection existed on the part of the Board of Guardians to keep the action of the presentment sessions within something like due bounds; and he was perfectly convinced that the result of the relief works would be attended with a fearful waste of public money, and the very minimum of relief to the destitute poor. Such had been the experience of relief works in England, Ireland, and in India. The hon. Member for Cork had brought forward an Amendment which could not even be sneered at as an Irish Amendment, because it had been taken textually from the measures of relief which had been adopted in Lancashire; and yet, although these provisions were considered admirable in England, and would also succeed in Ireland, the Government refused to grant this most moderate concession, and he (Mr. O'Donnell) could only see in that course the one-sided desire to tie up the distribution of relief in Ireland within the limits of the proprietorial class, only too notorious already for the neglect of their duties.

MAJOR NOLAN said, there was one point which he did not think had been noticed in the discussion. The Government ought to accept the Amendment, because it was one which was very flattering to them. The Amendment placed the roads in counties under the Poor Law Unions—a provision which was copied from the Government County Bill. It must be within the recollection of the Committee that two years ago the Government introduced a County Boards Bill, by which the management of roads was placed in the hands of a Committee of the Poor Law Unions. The organization of the counties in England by Poor Law Unions suggested the Amendment to the hon. Member for Cork. The Government very strongly advocated the plan that English county administration should be placed on the basis of the Poor Law Union; and, for that reason, they ought to accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork. The hon. Member for Cork only suggested that the organization into Poor Law Unions should be instituted in Ireland for a few months, whereas the Government sought to introduce that arrangement into England for an indefinite period of time.

THE O'DONOGHUE observed, that if the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork were carried there would be nothing for the baronial sessions to do. It was true that the proposal of the hon. Member was only an alternative proposition; but, for his part, he preferred the plan of making the Boards of Guardians the authority in this matter for several reasons. In the first place, they would be almost a permanent body, and would be much more independent, and more representative, and more likely to suggest works which would be useful to the community in general. He need hardly point out to anyone acquainted with baronial sessions that the Guardians would be much better able to plan and to carry out roads than the sessions. It was certainly a significant fact that nearly all the Irish Members concurred in recommending the Boards of Guardians as the only bodies capable of properly carrying out the work. He had only heard objections to the plan from two hon. Members from Ireland.

MR. LAW said, it had been urged that many powers, which might be of great service at present in the hands of Boards of Guardians, were already given to them by the Public Health Act. It must, however, be recollected that those powers which the local authorities in Lancashire enjoyed by the Act of 1863 were not merely those to which this argument applied, and which were conferred by the 14th section of that Act. The Amendment sought none of the powers mentioned in the clause, those being already vested in the Guardians under the Irish Public Health Act. But he ventured to think it was somewhat inconclusive reasoning to say that because three sets of works were authorized in Lancashire, and one of those sets of works was at present within the competency of Guardians in Ireland, therefore no authority need be given them to execute any of the others. It seemed to him that it would be much more desirable that the Boards of Guardians should be the authorities for carrying out works than the baronial sessions; and he would state his reasons. It would be remembered that, under the Labour Rate Act of 1847, the baronial sessions were appointed for purposes similar to these now contemplated by the Government in this Bill; but the works failed owing to their having no practical means of superintending their execution. They had no one except the county surveyor and his few assistants to see to the execution of the works. The result was that all this baronial machinery broke down in 1847. A great deal, indeed, might be said against works of that kind being undertaken at all; but it seemed to him that the Boards of Guardians, who would have to obtain the necessary funds on the security of their rates, were much more likely to be interested in the expenditure of the money, and much more likely to see that it was properly applied, than the baronial sessions. Another reason he had for preferring Boards of Guardians was that there was a different liability to assessment in the case of the two bodies. If the works were undertaken by Boards of Guardians the expense would be levied under the Poor Law system, by which occupiers at or under the value of £4 would not be subject to the Labour Act of 1847, although it placed the works in the hands of the baronial sessions, yet directed the assessment to be levied, not by way of baronial cess, but in the same manner as the poor rate; but the Government, though taking the Act of 1847 as their precedent for the present Bill, had declined to follow it in this important particular. As at present proposed, if the baronial sessions had charge of the works, the rate would be levied as baronial cess, to which all occupiers, of no matter what value, would be liable to contribute. No doubt it was provided that the rate should be divided equally between the landlord and tenant; but this, of course, subjected to half the rate all those poor occupiers who would be wholly exempt under the Poor Law system. It seemed to him of very great importance that occupiers under £4 should be exempted from liability, because they were a class of persons who were probably little better off than those who required relief. For the reasons he had stated, he certainly preferred the Poor Law system of relief works to those under the authority of baronial sessions. But if the Government insisted on retaining the latter machinery, he would, at the proper time, move Amendments exempting from liability to cess all occupiers of tenements not valued at £4 or upwards.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. GIBSON) said, that the hon. Member for Cork had rested his argument almost entirely upon the supposed analogy between the Lancashire distress and the present famine in Ireland. But there was a substantial difference between the two cases, both as to the cost of the distress and as to the class of persons affected. In Lancashire the suffering fell upon the operatives who were deprived of their work by the stopping of mills. They were largely inhabitants of towns, and under the provisions of the Lancashire Relief Act the majority of the works authorized and executed were sanitary works for towns. Out of the sum of £1,500,000 in Lancashire, eleven-twelfths, or eight-ninths, were expended for the execution of sanitary works in towns. The fact that the distress in Lancashire was principally in towns operated in no slight degree to modify the circumstances and destroy the analogy between the present famine and that in Lancashire, upon which the whole argument of the hon. Member for Cork rested. To adopt the same measures now as were adopted in Lancashire would involve the danger of taking people away from their farms and leave those lands either badly cultivated or to fall out of cultivation altogether. Sir Charles Trevelyan, whose authority had been appealed to in this matter, said that the first symptoms of neglected cultivation appeared in 1846, and were worse in the districts where relief works were carried on at the greatest expenditure. At the present, Boards of Guardians were throughout Ireland the rural sanitary authorities, and possessed, under the existing machinery, powers to supply whatever sanitary works were required. No doubt such sanitary works as the exigency of the distress required would be carried out, and would give substantial public employment of a most valuable description. That was a subject not to be lost sight of. If the people should require exceptional employment, and that employment could not be found for them on their own farms, or was not supplied by the landowners in the district, then the extraordinary presentment sessions would come in and supply work upon some undertaking of public utility. The execution of sanitary works depended solely on the Boards of Guardians, and they could direct them if they thought it necessary. But was it necessary to call into existence a perfectly novel system of relief works by the present Bill, like those proposed by the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork? It seemed to him that the hon. Member for Cork had not fully considered the enormous difficulties that surrounded the topics with which the Amendment dealt. The hon. Gentleman had given up the 1st clause of the Amendment, and had admitted, with a candour he had always exhibited in discussion in the House, that it would be necessary to modify the remainder of the Amendment. The hon. Member proposed that any Board of Guardians, with the consent of the Local Government Board, should have power to—

> "Widen, deepen, embank, or straighten, any river or stream, and also enter into any agreement respecting the execution of any such work, or the apportionment of the cost thereof, with any person or authority interested in such land, river, or stream, or any property adjoining thereto or likely to be benefited thereby; to agree with the owner or occupier of any land in their district, or other parties interested, to make or repair any road, earthwork, or bridge for railway or tramway, or to execute any work of drainage or private improvement in or on such lands at the expense of the owner, occupier, or parties interested, and may allow time for the repayment of the amount expended, and to receive the sum by annual instalments extending over a period not exceeding thirty-five years, at such rate of interest as may be agreed upon, all such works to be executed under an engineer appointed by the Board of Works."

Thus it would be seen that the hon. Gentleman proposed that the Guardians should execute improvements, not upon public land, but upon private ground, and that they should enter into contracts with the landowners and occupiers for the execution of such works. He would ask what machinery had the Guardians at present for laying out those works, or for superintending their execution? If they were to enter upon such a scheme as that, they would require an entirely new staff of persons who would have to be most substantially paid. It was admitted by his hon. Friend that the Amendment would require substantial alteration before it was passed. But all those matters would cause considerable delay, for important changes would be necessitated in the Bill. It would be quite impossible to make the necessary alterations by tomorrow. Every day was of importance. It was a mistake to suppose that this was merely a Bill of Indemnity to the Government. Until the Bill was passed the Boards of Guardians were deprived of very substantial powers of borrowing; and, moreover, the Government was deprived of the power of compelling the Boards of Guardians to act as the exigencies of the case might require. It had been urged that the Government should show more confidence in the Guardians, and should not require to obtain powers to compel them to act; but the powers must be obtained, as the matters could not be left to chance. If the powers existed, doubtless the Guardians would not require that they should be put into active exercise, but would be content with knowing that they could be compelled to act. It was very necessary that the Bill should be allowed to pass as rapidly as possible. It contained very large and useful remedial measures, which would be held entirely in abeyance by delay. The clause had been very fully discussed, and had been presented in every variety of view to the House. The clause had been fully considered by the Government; and he hoped that after the discussion that had taken place the Amendment would be withdrawn, and that they should be allowed to proceed with the remainder of the Bill.

MAJOR NOLAN said, that a very great point had been made of the injury which would result if the Bill were not passed immediately. But he wished to point out that, for the next few months, the tenants would require to be engaged upon their own farms if they were to have a crop next year, and relief works would be of no use during that period. If they wanted to stop the work on the farms of the tenants from the 10th of March to the 15th of April, and to recommence from the 15th of April to the 15th of July, what body could do it so well as the Boards of Guardians? It should be remembered that the baronial sessions could not give out-door relief; and the result of placing out-door relief in the hands of one body, and the execution of relief works under the authority of another, would not be beneficial. Moreover, the landed proprietors would not stop their works while relief was being given. On the other hand, if the Poor Law Guardians had the control of the relief works, they would be able to alternate the different kinds of relief and control the two systems. No public body could act so well in the matter as the Poor Law Guardians. He should recommend, however, that no relief works should be undertaken until the tenants had had time to cultivate their farms. It had been said that no sanitary works would be possible, because the population amongst whom the distress existed was entirely a rural population. But there were some sanitary measures required even in the rural districts, such as the supply of water and kindred matters. He believed that the baronial sessions were the worst authority they could use, because they could not give employment to rough labour in making the drains or other improvements. The Board of Works, on the contrary, could make roads and drains on which rough labour might be employed; and it was well known that such works as those would be most useful at the present time. The hon. Member for Cork desired to see such works executed, and that was the whole object of his Amendment. With regard to the argument against delaying the Bill, he was certainly not anxious to delay it; but this matter was the very kernel and gist of the Bill. There were other points which might be got through quickly, and there would be no difficulty in proceeding with the rest of the measure. The Bill could be taken to-morrow—for the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) would, no doubt, give way to the Government on the matter.

SIR WALTER B. BARTTELOT said, the hon. and gallant Member for Galway called this clause the kernel of the Bill, and so, no doubt, it was; and, therefore, it behoved the Committee to give it the most careful consideration. The hon. and gallant Member called it the kernel of the Bill, because, under its provisions, money would be handed over to the Boards of Guardians. He believed that Boards of Guardians in Ireland had never had the power of giving out-door relief before. [Several hon. MEMBERS: Yes, they have.] Well, it had been only under very peculiar circumstances that it had been allowed to be given; and if the door were opened now for giving money in that kind of way it would be very difficult to close it. Whenever distress recurred this case would be quoted as a precedent, and the Boards of Guardians would be looked to as the bodies to have authority. Much had been said about the Lancashire distress; but he thought the two cases were not analogous. The Lancashire distress was local; it was confined to certain centres of population, and was caused by the non-receipt of raw material for manufacture. The coal, iron, and other trades were good; agriculture was not at a standstill, but men engaged in cotton manufacture were out of employment in those districts. They were engaged on roads and other works on the outskirts of towns that benefited largely and brought in large tracts of land which were made available for building purposes, and every one of those works was recuperative. As soon as cotton could be got again the whole thing was past; and the money was paid, and properly paid. The hon. Member for Cork proposed to borrow money, the re-payment of which should extend over 35 years. In Lancashire money was borrowed at 3½ per cent; but this money was sought to be borrowed at a far lower rate——["No, no!"] Well, then, at 3½ per cent for 35 years; and who would say that the burden thus created would not press very heavily upon localities? They knew very well that the distress was local, and that it was confined to a particular class, and it was always recurring to that particular class. They had lost their potatoes, and were in a most distressed state; and the best way of meeting that distress in the future was by raising the condition of that particular class. He was anxious to get at the best way, and to do all he could towards relieving the distress. But they must raise the people in some way other than by giving them relief work, because, in that way, they would be taken from the cultivation of their farms. He would go a step further; and he knew that what he was about to say was, in many instances, true. He ventured to say that the Boards of Guardians, in many cases, would not administer the relief well. They were very little—some of them—removed from the class who were seeking relief. If re-payment of the loans was extended over 35 years they would give away the money in the most open-handed way; and he thought it would be a most mischievous thing to hand over to men of that kind powers which were sure to be indiscriminately exercised. Those were some of the reasons that made him think it would be very unwise to accept the Amendment. The hon. Member for Cork admitted at once that it would not hold water, and that great alterations would have to be made in it before it could be passed. His hon. Friend knew perfectly well what happened in 1846 and 1847. He knew that the money which was voted by this country was absolutely and entirely wasted; and what guarantee was there that that would not occur again? If they could propose some plan and show that the money would be fairly and properly invested, that it would be a great benefit to Ireland, and that they were all prepared to bear their portions, that would be a different matter. But all they said was—"Hand over the money to us; that is what we want; it is not giving food and fuel to those who are starving; we want to have the power of expending the money." That, he said, would be most mischievous for the future of Ireland. It would recoil upon the country, as the expenditure of 1846 and 1847 had done. There had been a very instructive debate in "another place," from which they learnt what noble Lords and others thought of the way in which the money was expended. He was not very sweet upon the baronial presentment sessions having such power as they now had, and he should like to see it curtailed to the utmost extent. He should like to see that they had no power to inaugurate any work, except such as could be done by contract. What the House should do was to meet an emergency, which they must meet, by all means; but they must not go beyond that which was absolutely necessary, or they would do an immense amount of harm to Ireland. He knew his hon. Friend had brought the Amendment forward with the best possible intentions. There had been some meetings in his hon. Friend's own county under the baronial presentment sessions, at which the success of the Government had been acknowledged in giving landlords power to borrow at so low a rate; and in one barony they rejected 67 presentments that were made to them, on the ground that certain noble Lords in that district had borrowed an amount of money that would be of the greatest advantage and benefit to that district. His belief was that the Government had taken a right course. He hoped the clauses would be so worded as to prevent reckless expenditure on the part of the baronial sessions; and as to the Amendment, it was very well to discuss it, but it would not be for the general interest of Ireland to adopt it.

MR. BIGGAR said, what was really wanted was a reform of the Land Laws, by which the people of Ireland would have an opportunity of improving the land for the benefit of the whole community. The improvements should be made for the benefit of the persons who made them. Unfortunately, in Ireland, all improvements were made for the benefit of one particular class—the landlord class—who, in most instances, made none of them, but reaped all the benefits. That was the real difficulty of this question, and it was a matter that must be decided at no distant date. They heard great complaints of an absent Member (the hon. Member for Meath); but when that hon. Member came back he thought some of those who had attacked him behind his back would be rather slow to fight him when he was present. As to the Amendment before the Committee, one leading principle in it was that preference ought to be given to the Poor Law Guardians over the presentment sessions. The arguments of its opponents were mainly based on the principle of allowing existing things to continue simply because they existed. He contended that the presentment sessions would be more likely than Boards of Guardians to take a view of matters that would be favourable to the landlords; the sessions would be more or less under landlord influence, and would not be impartial. The hon. and gallant Baronet (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) had alluded to a barony in which the landlords had borrowed money of the Government; but if they had not done so probably public works would have been required to be undertaken, and, therefore, the argument on that point did not amount to much. No substantial argument had been advanced against relief works, and the only question remaining was as to who should carry them out. The Amendment only proposed that power should be given to Boards of Guardians, subject to the approval of their undertakings by the Local Government Board; and, therefore, they would not have the power of spending money in a reckless manner. A strong argument in favour of the Guardians was their local knowledge, and the fact that they met weekly, and had a continuous existence; whilst the presentment sessions would only meet when they were specially called together by the Local Government Board. The making of new roads would be a very desirable thing in counties where there was a large traffic; but in the great majority of places in Ireland the traffic was so small that the existing roads were quite sufficient for all that was likely to occur, and money expended in making new ones would be entirely thrown away. He thought that part of the Amendment which proposed to give Boards of Guardians power to widen and deepen rivers was of great importance. According to the provisions of the Bill, a landlord might borrow money to improve his own property; but there was no provision by which two or more proprietors could borrow money for the purpose of making a joint improvement. As an illustration of a kind of improvement which would be very valuable, he instanced the fact that near the top of the Shannon, immediately adjoining Lough Allen, the stream was narrow and rapid, and the adjacent lands were periodically flooded, and much damage was done. If the Guardians had authority to lower the bed of the river for about a mile they would lower the level of the lake, and prevent a recurrence of the floods. That improvement would benefit a great many people, and would be more reasonable than talking of large sanitary works amongst a rural and scattered population. He thought the Government had framed their proposals in a haphazard way, and he urged them to accept the Amendment. The Attorney General for Ireland had told them they were delaying a very important measure; but as the Guardians had been authorized to give out-door relief, which was the only pressing matter, there was really no hurry. Although he had not much admiration for the franchise by which the Guardians were elected, they were a more populalar and representative body than the presentment sessions system, which was condemned on all sides.

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY did not know whether it was possible in a matter of this kind to convince the Irish Government what was the most desirable course to take. If such an impression could, under any circumstances, be conveyed to their minds, it ought to be conveyed in this particular instance; because the principle of the Amendment proposed by his hon. Friend the Member for Cork had been supported not only by Members who represented Ireland on that side of the House, but by hon. Members who sat for Irish constituencies on the other side of the House. The hon. Member for Carlow recommended the hon. Member for Cork to withdraw his Amendment, and bring in the principle embodied in it in a separate Bill; and the senior Member for Carlow, who was out and out a most energetic supporter of the Government on all occasions, had suggested that the Government should itself accept the principle of the Amendment, and bring in a clause of their own at the end of the Bill in order to carry it out. In the same direction, there had been a unanimous chorus from the Members who represented Ireland on that side, and who represented the people who would have to pay the cost of these very works, asking the Government to consider the Amendment. He must say, however, that when he saw in the course of the discussion the Chief Secretary for Ireland rise early in the debate and declare his intentions, he was always reminded of the story of the racoon who was going to be shot at by the celebrated Colonel Crockett. When the racoon saw that he was being aimed at he proposed to come down at once, when he found out that his enemy was Colonel Crockett. Now, whenever the Chief Secretary rose early, he (Mr. Mitchell Henry) felt that the Government was perfectly impervious to argument; and in this instance he had proposed before the dinner-hour that they should at once go to a division, and testify in that way their opinion that the Government had taken a wrong course—for being guided by past experience in matters of this kind, he never expected that any amount of argument or discussion would produce the smallest effect on the intentions of the Government. Now, what was the real position of the matter? During the time of distress in Lancashire, the Guardians of the poor, who were really responsible to the ratepayers and were brought into association with them, had that power given to them. In the time of distress in Ireland the Government refused to trust the Guardians of the poor. Now, that was at once establishing another distinction between the treatment of Ireland and the treatment of England. It was another step towards the perpetuation of that system of jealousy which the Irish people must feel towards a Government that treated them in that way. Where could be the possible objection on the part of the Government to consider the principle of this Amendment? The Guardians of the poor would have to repay this money. It was said that it was money advanced at 1 per cent. That was perfectly true; but it was to be repaid at an annual cost of 3½ per cent—that was to say, there was to be 2½ per cent for a sinking fund, so that for every £100 expended in this way to keep the people in work rather than in idleness the ratepayers would have to pay £3 10*s.*; yet when the Irish people asked to be allowed to carry on these works, which would be a positive benefit, the Government virtually said—"We really cannot even consider it." He wanted to know who had advised the Government to employ the medium of the presentment sessions for the work? The presentment sessions had been condemned in history. During the last famine period, over and over again most useless works were instituted, and they remained useless to this day. Those were works instituted by the presentment sessions. It was said that the works that would be carried on even now under the powers of the present Bill would not be of very great advantage; but with regard to works carried on by the Guardians of the poor, they would be works much more likely—indeed, almost absolutely certainly—to be useful. The presentment sessions was composed of magistrates, grand jurors, and a few assisting cesspayers, who were nominees of the magistrates. If any works were carried on, the fear was that they would be works useful only to particular magistrates, such construction of roads carried on on several estates, that were not likely to be useful to the suffering tenants—that was the supposition, and it was confirmed by the experience of the past famine periods. Therefore, under these circumstances, he would venture to suggest to his hon. Friend the Member for Cork that he should withdraw his Amendment, provided the Government would accept the advice of their strongest supporter, the senior Member for Carlow, and accepting the principle and bring up a clause at the end of the Bill at a future stage, embodying the principles of the Amendment to as great or as small an extent as they wished. It seemed to him that it was one of the most disheartening things in the world to discuss a Bill of this nature with a Government who refused the most reasonable concessions. It was perfectly certain that these matters had really not been considered by what he should call the strength of the Cabinet. They could not possibly believe that in a Bill of this kind experienced and able Members of the Cabinet had brought their minds to the work, and considered how best it should be done, because otherwise it would be impossible to understand how the Irish Members who sat on both sides of the Hsuse should be opposed to the course that was being taken by the Government. It was simply being carried against argument, against reason, and against common sense, in order to give effect to some determination which had been arrived at in the Castle of Dublin by the advice of some of the permanent officials who had been the curse of the country from time immemorial. He appealed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to consider the advice of his own followers; and he was sure that his hon. Friend the Member for Cork would willingly withdraw his Amendment if the Government would take it into consideration, and themselves bring up a clause embodying its principle, carrying it out as much and only as far as they pleased.

MR. KIRK said, he rose to support the Amendment, which he certainly thought the Government ought to accept, and to introduce into the Bill. He knew a good deal in regard to the administration of out-door relief, and he recollected what happened at the time soup kitchens were established in 1846 and 1847. He believed the establishment of those soup kitchens was the cause of a good many people being degraded and demoralized. By the provisions of this Bill, the giving of out-door relief, and having no work done in return for it, would, in every case in which it was given, demoralize and degrade the people. Under these circumstances, he regarded it as a most judicious act on the part of his hon. Friend the Member for Cork to bring forward this Amendment; and he was quite sure that his hon. Friend, as the Leader of the Irish Party, had no desire but to facilitate the action of Her Majesty's Government, and provide a satisfactory means by which the relief could be given, and by which the people would give a fair, honest day's labour for the money that would be given to them. So far as the giving of out-door relief was concerned, he thought there was a great deal in the present system that was altogether wrong. By the existing system, many persons were receiving out-door relief that were not entitled to it, simply because they pressed their way, and were so clamorous for it. Persons who had no shame, and who had already been degraded by the mode in which the system had been carried out, got the out-door relief, while more deserving people got none because they did not look after it at all. He believed that, in this instance, the same result would happen, and that many people who did not deserve out-door relief would get it. With regard to the institution of reproductive works, if the Government would consider any other mode of establishing them besides those mentioned in the Amendment, he was quite sure his hon. Friend the Member for Cork would at once give way. He (Mr. Kirk) entirely objected to the money being expended, and expended alone, in the giving of out-door relief, without having in every instance some kind of labour performed for it. As to what had been said of the employment of farm labourers, he had no fear that they would be drawn away by employment upon public works from their ordinary occupation on the farms when their services on the farms was most required. As his hon. Friend the Member for Galway (Mr. Mitchell Henry) had said, the Guardians would be the persons who would know much better than any other persons when to stop this labour, in order that the people should return to their ordinary employment upon the land. From the present time, and from the 1st of March, there would be very little work done in Ireland, so far as agriculture was concerned; but the people would be comparatively idle until the harvest commenced. Consequently, the employment of the people upon reproductive works by the Boards of Guardians would do no earthly injury to the farmers. He was a farmer himself, and therefore knew a good deal about the matter. It would not do the slightest injury to the farmers to employ the people who were clamouring for labour. The Irish people were not a people who wished to be made paupers. Even the labourers of Ireland had an independent spirit, and the small farmers of that country were as independent a class of men as were to be found in the world. They would reject the idea of receiving out-door relief except they were in a state of starvation, with their families dying of hunger around them. But if they could obtain work, so that they could say—"We are not receiving alms; we are not receiving charity; but we are receiving money for a honest day's labour," then they would feel that their independence had not gone, and that no demoralization had taken place like that which would take place if there was no resource but the indiscriminate administration of out-door relief. He recollected that when the soup kitchens were established in 1847 some of the persons who received relief at that time had remained beggars ever since; whereas they would have remained independent in spirit, and have sought to maintain themselves by work, if they had been employed upon public works, instead of being made the recipients of out-door relief. Therefore, having seen what had already passed in Ireland at a time of famine, he felt himself bound to object to any recurrence to a system of wholesale relief without provision being made for the employment of the people who received it. He believed that it would do a great amount of good in Ireland to empower the Boards of Guardians to provide reproductive work. It must be borne in mind that it would not be the money of the Government that would be expended in these reproductive works or in out-door relief, but the money of the people of the country. The Government only lent it to them, and it was repaid back after a certain time. Therefore, it was the money of the people, and not of the Government, that was to be expended, and the Guardians of the Poor Law Unions were the people who ought to have the distribution of the money. They of all persons would be able to distribute it to the best advantage, and would know the best means of saving the country from heavy taxation hereafter. If the money were spent in reproductive works, such as the drainage of land, the deepening of rivers, and other useful works, the result would be to increase the future prosperity of the country, and there would be no loss to the Guardians or to the ratepayers of the district. Therefore, it was only an act of justice to the people of Ireland to give them an opportunity of expending the money in the very best way; and while it was being expended in the best way the people themselves would be prevented from becoming a burden upon the country in the future.

Mr. SHAW remarked, that he had waited for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to respond to the appeal which had been made to him by the hon. Member for Galway (Mr. Mitchell Henry); and he regretted that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland and the Chief Secretary had not expressed their intention of accepting the principle of the Amendment. He was quite sure that he (Mr. Shaw) put forward no theoretical view at all; but he spoke from his own practical knowledge of the matter, when he said that it would be an injudicious step on the part of the Government to reject the Amendment. The object they had in view was to prevent the great waste of money which occurred in 1847. The system of acting by means of the presentment sessions wasted money then; and, so far as he could judge from all the accounts he had seen, and especially in his own county, they were going about wasting money now. They were presenting roads that were attempted to be made in 1847, and which no human being had attempted to do anything with since. Yet they were now being presented for again, as a means of finding employment for the people. One hon. Member objected to the Boards of Guardians being the source from which employment was provided, on the ground that the members of such Boards were themselves almost on an equality with the people receiving relief. He could not imagine where the hon. Member got his information. The Boards of Guardians were composed of magistrates and landowners. The persons who attended most frequently the meetings of the Board were the chairman and deputy chairman, and they were almost invariably landlords, and were the most diligent in attending to the details of the administration of the Poor Law. In point of fact, he did not know a better machinery for administering money than the Poor Law Guardians of Ireland. There might be a few instances where this was not the case. At a former stage of the Bill he had raised the question as to the propriety of spending the money on roads, and roads alone; and some Member of the Government said that the Lord Lieutenant had power to extend the powers of the presentment sessions so as to include other works. He believed it was the Chancellor of the Exchequer who made that statement; and he (Mr. Shaw) remarked at the time that it would be necessary to have these extended works defined in the Bill, because they did not like on every occasion, when they had useful works to undertake, to be compelled to go up to Dublin and discuss the matter where there was really no necessity. He thought they ought to have power to originate these works themselves. He knew instances where, in his own district and county, works might be carried out to great public advantage, and where they must give out-door relief to able-bodied people, or otherwise the able-bodied people would be starving. If they had power to do the things which he proposed, even in a modified way—for he was quite willing to yield to the suggestions which had been made by his hon. Friends—he was convinced that great advantage would follow. He was perfectly ready to say to the Government—"Accept this Amendment in principle, and I am ready to throw over some of the details contained in it." What he desired was to save the self-respect of the people, and to enable the authorities to do useful work, instead of squandering the money on the people without any return. Any further clauses that would be necessary to give effect to the proposition he was confident the right hon. and learned Attorney General for Ireland would be able to draw up by to-morrow morning. He (Mr. Shaw) had not such a very bad opinion of the Government as his hon. Friend the Member for Galway appeared to have. He thought that the matter commended itself so completely and entirely to the common sense of the House; and seeing that it had been supported so completely in principle on both sides of the House, and was altogether of so practical a nature, he could not imagine that the Government, on account of some red-tapeism, or some officialism at Dublin, would prevent the object of the Amendment from being carried out. He might add, in conclusion, that he had not the slightest wish to delay the progress of the Bill, but was simply acting from a sense of duty, and he had no other object whatever.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER apologized for not having risen earlier; but he had thought that other hon. Members were anxious to take part in the discussion. Although he was most anxious to proceed with the Bill, and to make substantial progress, he could not but feel that it was important the House should hear the practical views of hon. Gentlemen representing Ireland. But he must, he was sorry to say, still adhere to the decision at which the Government had arrived, and which had already been expressed by his two right hon. Friends near him. He could assure the Committee that he took this course, not from any feeling of red-tapeism or any narrow-minded prejudice, but because by the process by which they had arrived at that conclusion they had satisfied themselves that they were making the best and most suitable proposals for the good of Ireland in the present crisis. He did not quite understand what it was that hon. Gentlemen, in supporting this Amendment, were really driving at. Did they propose that the Committee should give power to the Boards of Guardians to set on foot a certain class of works in addition to, or in substitution for, the works of the baronial presentment sessions? Some hon. Members seemed to urge that these powers should be given in addition to what was already proposed to be carried into effect by the Government. They said—"The baronial sessions may do certain works, but they will present works that are not of a reproductive character; there are other classes of works which the Boards of Guardians might do; and, therefore, it is better to add this machinery to your Bill." On the other hand, many hon. Members had spoken in a tone which was unmistakeable, and which pointed to this—that if they could get the power given which they now asked for the Boards of Guardians, it would be proper to strike out the power which had been given to the presentment sessions. He was not certain which of these two views was the one on which they were now invited to act. If it was intended to add this to the other kind of machinery for public works, what would be the effect? They had already done a good deal on the responsibility of the Government, and they had proposed to Parliament to sanction and develop what they had done in the way of providing what might be called roughly relief works. They had proposed to give powers to the landlords under the Lands Improvement Acts. Works of this kind had already been incurred and applied for up to something between £500,000 and £600,000; and probably before the end of the month it would amount to a somewhat larger sum than that. Besides that, they had provided for advances for sanitary works to be conducted under the Boards of Guardians, and a considerable sum had been applied for under that head. Then they had the works that were presented by the baronial presentment sessions; and he wished to remind the Committee that the baronial presentment sessions could only be called in on the suggestion and promotion of the Boards of Guardians themselves, who would put the machinery in motion. They applied to the Lord Lieutenant to certify that there was occasion for employment, and then the sessions set the works on foot. If, in entire addition to this, they were to create a new demand, they would find themselves in this very dangerous position, so forcibly pointed out by the hon. Member for the Cardigan boroughs (Mr. D. Davies), who had made the best and most practical suggestions he had heard. He was sorry that the House was so empty at the time the hon. Member made his remarks; but the hon. Member with very great force, and not expressing any opinion with regard to the Amendment or otherwise, pointed out that they would run a very great danger indeed if they drew off the people from agricultural work, such as tillage works, just at a time when it was most important to provide for the supply of food for the next year. That was one of the greatest misfortunes that was noticed in the proceedings that took place in the Famine of 1846. The works that had been executed and called for then in the first winter of distress took up the labour of a great number of people; and his right hon. Friend had quoted from Sir Charles Trevelyan's account of the proceedings to show that tillage fell off and was deficient precisely in those parts of the country where public works had been carried on. They must, therefore, be careful that they did not introduce a new competitor at this time which would draw the people off from works in which they ought to be employed. They had, with great hesitation and reluctance, gone the length of proposing to confer these powers upon the baronial sessions. They were desirous of avoiding anything in the nature of public works, and they were satisfied that they would be committing an error if they were to go on adding another class of works to those already sanctioned. They were told that the example of Lancashire ought to be followed, and that they ought to do through their Boards of Guardians in Ireland what they did through the Board of Guardians in Lancashire in the famine there. The cases were exceedingly different—partly, as his right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary pointed out, because they were only able in 1863 in Lancashire to set works of this character in motion by a special provision for employing the medium of Boards of Guardians. There were no sanitary authorities then who had the power of doing what the Boards of Guardians were called on to do. Nor was there any great fund. There was a small fund for land improvement, and they came forward and advanced from the Treasury a sum of £1,200,000 to be used in employment on works of general improvement, and they did that through the Boards of Guardians. But in Ireland they had this class of works in operation already. They had their system of advances for land improvements. They did not require to put the Boards of Guardians in operation for that. They had the machinery already. It was in full work, and they had given it an ample field. So they had also machinery for sanitary works. They would still be able to give employment in that direction. They had these two things to consider, and there was also the third point dwelt upon by his right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General for Ireland—the circumstances of the population. How different were those in Lancashire! They had to provide for a large body of artizans and operatives thrown out of employment from the cessation of the factories; and they, therefore, endeavoured to employ them in any way they could —not drawing them off from other important labour they ought to be doing, because, unfortunately, there was no other labour available for them. But here they ran the risk of drawing off the country labourers from the particular occupation it was their special duty to perform, and they would thereby be in danger of doing that to which the hon. Member for the Cardigan boroughs referred—namely, injuring the prospects of their crops for the following year. That being so—and he assumed that he was right—if he was not right, at all events, he had exceedingly good grounds for the belief that he was right—then he was correct in saying that they ought not to add the employment contemplated by the Amendment to the employment of labour for sanitary works at the present time. But some hon. Gentleman got up and said—"Oh, but you are going to do this in your baronial presentment sessions, and your baronial presentment sessions are a mistake. They are the wrong machinery to employ. You ought to employ the Boards of Guardians." The best reply to that was that if this was so it was a pity hon. Members did not find it out sooner. They had been discussing the Bill all that night. There had been prior discussions on the matter, and they were just arrived at the time when this machinery was being set in motion. The baronial sessions had been receiving applications in many cases. In many cases the loans had already been agreed to. In many others they were now at that moment under consideration. If all the machinery was to be stopped it was a great pity the Government were not warned sooner, so that there would have been no need to throw out of gear the great operations which had now just been begun. If this Amendment were now carried they would have to begin the work all over again, and the Guardians would be called upon to do that which had been hitherto committed to the presentment sessions. He did not understand whether they were trying by this Amendment to commit to the Board of Guardians any other work than that which had hitherto been proposed to be committed to the presentment sessions. Any work which the Guardians, under this Amendment, might present, might be presented, at the present time, by the baronial sessions. Any work undertaken in the one case, might be undertaken in the other. That being the intention, as he understood, he did not see what was to be gained by endeavouring to substitute one machinery for the other, and, to use a familiar illustration, by changing horses when they were just in the middle of the stream. He did not say the Amendment was not a right one, but the present plan had already been partially carried out; and he would desire to press very strongly on hon. Gentlemen that it was better to proceed with something like consistency, or, at all events, to let the Government know very clearly and very definitely what was the intention of these propositions, and whether hon. Members wished to substitute the Boards of Guardians for the baronial sessions, or merely to add them together. For his own part, he could not but think that the Boards of Guardians would have plenty to do in the proper work they had to attend to. They had a most serious task before them, for they had to keep the people from starving. They had to see that the relieving officers were properly organized, and did their duty properly, and they would have to see to the discharge of that part of their duties which related to sanitary works; and they would also have to see to the distribution of potatoes for seed under the Bill which had recently passed through the House. He would, therefore, say to the House very seriously, do not overload the Boards of Guardians, and do not overwork them at the time when they require all their energy and attention for their proper work. Do not expose them either to the temptation that may occur when you call upon people to perform work of a profitable character. They were to employ the people by this Amendment for the original benefit undoubtedly of those people; but still there was the fact that the work might be of advantage to the occupiers or the owners, and that would expose the persons who carried out the work to temptation. He maintained that they were, at all events, proceeding upon principles which had been fairly considered. The Government spent many weeks in the autumn in considering the precise proposals that they would make. They postponed giving anything in the nature of encouragement to public works in the earlier stages of the distress; and it was only when they saw that it had become absolutely necessary to provide some sort of labour that they came to the deliberate conclusion, after taking the best advice, to prefer, of the two systems, the baronial sessions. He believed those suggestions were now working well, he would not say without faults or without mistakes; but that, on the whole, the system was working as well as could be expected under the present necessity, and, therefore, for his part, he did sincerely hope the Committee would not think it necessary to abandon it.

Mr. D. O'CONOR said, he had no intention of prolonging the discussion; but he merely rose to protest against the statement that Irish Members had now only begun to object to the system of baronial sessions. If he remembered rightly, a very strong objection to those sessions was expressed in every debate on the subject, and on the first line of the 3rd clause, a few nights ago, a very strong argument was addressed to the Committee against those suggestions, showing that they were not the proper body to be intrusted with that work. What happened? The Chairman of the Committee intervened, and said that was not the proper time to raise the question—that it would be time enough to raise it when they came to this particular clause. Now they were told that it was too late, and that the question ought to have been raised earlier. That was the way in which the Government perpetually checkmated them. When they first raised the question they were told it was not the proper time to discuss it. Then, when the clause was reached, they were told it was then too late to enter into the matter, and that they must pass the Bill as it stood. He was as anxious to pass the Bill as anybody; but, for his part, he must very strongly protest against the observations of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. SWANSTON said, a few nights ago he referred to his experience in 1846 and 1847 of the disadvantages of baronial sessions, and he had seen nothing since to alter his opinion that the same reckless proceedings would again occur. His opinion was that the Guardians ought to have been left to institute public works in their own localities; for, in 1846 and 1847, he found that the principal works were carried on very inconveniently to the poor people generally. The men who wanted employment were forced to go long distances to obtain it, instead of having work brought to their very doors as proposed by this Amendment. Therefore, he trusted it was not too late now to press the Government to consider this Amendment. He thought it was much to be regretted that something had not been done to prevent works being begun at this particular season, when farming operations ought to be carried out. The presentment sessions were just beginning their works; and these works would, consequently, just come into operation at the very time they should be set aside for a month or two, and the people should be at work upon the land.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 89; Noes 109: Majority 20.—(Div. List, No. 13.)

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY moved, in page 2, line 16, to add the words—

> "Any union or part of an union may be scheduled in the manner stated in the public notice issued by the Commissioners of Public Works, on the twenty-second day of November, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-nine, as a distressed district, for the purpose of extending thereto the right to borrow money for the purposes of out-door relief, or for sanitary improve-

ments, or for the improvement of land, or for works to be presented by extraordinary presentment sessions, as set forth in the tenth section of this Act."

It would be obvious that, in order that any Union should get an opportunity to borrow money for any of the purposes set out in his Amendment, they must be scheduled in accordance with the notice of the 22nd November. The object of his Amendment was that the Union, or a distressed district, might be scheduled for one particular purpose only, instead of the general purposes mentioned. It would be much more easy to permit a place to be scheduled for only one particular kind of relief; and it certainly was an objection to scheduling a Union that by being scheduled it was allowed to become entitled to ask for money for every one of the purposes mentioned. [Mr. J. LOWTHER was understood to express the approval of the Government to that part of the Amendment.] As that part of his Amendment was acceded to, the second point he wished to come to was one permitting only a part of a Union to be scheduled instead of the whole. According to the notice of the 22nd November, under which the entire scheme of relief was to be worked, the whole of the Union must be scheduled in order that any of these schemes of relief might be carried into effect. His proposal was to schedule only part of a Union, and to schedule it only for the particular kind of relief required there. For this second Amendment there was a precedent in the Amendment conceded last evening, moved by himself, by which the power of compulsory out-door relief might be given to any electoral division, and his second Amendment was recommended by the same arguments which he then used.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. GIBSON), asked the hon. and learned Member to explain more exactly the definite objects he sought to accomplish by his Amendment. By the existing Circular all applications for sanitary purposes, or for improvements of land, must be made before the 29th of February. Did the hon. and learned Gentleman, by this Amendment, propose to extend that date longer, so as to enable the Local Government Board to schedule districts after that date? [Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY: No.] If that was so, he did not quite understand the object of the first part of the Amendment. Then, as to works to be presented to the extraordinary presentment sessions, that was one of the purposes fixed by the Bill.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY said, that the general object that he had in view in proposing his Amendment was to enable distressed districts to be scheduled for the purposes of relief, without rendering it necessary that they should be scheduled for other purposes. If the Amendment were agreed to matters would be greatly simplified, inasmuch as the authorities would be enabled to schedule a district for one particular purpose. In order that the Board of Guardians might be entitled to raise money under the clause as it stood, a district must be scheduled as a distressed Union; and power was given to the Board of Guardians, with the sanction of the Local Government Board, to borrow money for the purpose of defraying any costs, charges, or expenses incurred, or to be incurred by them in the execution of the Act. Now, what he desired to do was to provide machinery by which a Union, or any part of a Union, might be scheduled for the purposes of out-door relief, without being scheduled for any other purpose. It would not, however, be at all compulsory on the Government, if the Amendment were agreed to, to schedule a district after the 29th of February for that particular purpose, if the time for carrying it into effect happened to have expired. It was, in his opinion, absolutely necessary that there should be power to schedule part of a Union, as well as an entire Union; and that object, he might add, he proposed to accomplish by the first words of his Amendment.

MR. J. LOWTHER said, that he would offer no objection to the Amendment as it had been explained by the hon. and learned Member.

Amendment *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 4 (Power to borrow).

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he proposed to insert, in line 25, after the word "Act," the words "or of the Poor Law Acts, other than for building." The object of the Amendment, he said, was to empower Boards of Guardians to borrow, not only for the new and exceptional purposes of the Bill, but for the general purposes of the

Union other than that named in the Amendment.

Amendment *agreed to.*

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY moved, as an Amendment, in page 2, line 27, after the word "expenses," to insert the following words:—

> "Every union to which an order authorising relief outside the workhouse shall be issued under the third section of this Act may, with such sanction as aforesaid, for the purpose of defraying any costs, charges, or expenses incurred, or to be incurred, in providing and distributing relief under such order, borrow and take up at interest any sums of money necessary for defraying any such costs, charges, and expenses."

The Amendment was one which, in his opinion, was of considerable importance. Clause 3 gave the Local Government Board power to compel—though the word used in the clause was "authorized"—by order under their seal the Guardians of the poor of any Union to give out-door relief on a very extensive scale; and the expenses of that relief would, no doubt in many cases, be very great. That being so, Clause 4 gave the Unions scheduled as distressed districts, and those Unions only, power to raise money for the extraordinary out-door relief they might give under Clause 3, and power also, under the Amendment of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to borrow for even out-door relief. Now, what he desired to do was to have it laid down in one form or another in the Bill, that if a Union was so badly off that the Local Government Board found it necessary to empower the Guardians to give out-door relief, they should be entitled to raise money at 3½ per cent, payable in 10 years. The Amendment of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to which the Committee had just agreed, furnished, he contended, a strong argument in favour of that now proposed. According to the right hon. Gentleman's Amendment, even in a Union where there was no necessity whatever for expending money in an extraordinary manner in out-door relief, a Union might borrow money at the rate which he had just mentioned for a period of 10 years. Now, when such a privilege was given to a Union which was not driven to give extraordinary out-door relief, surely other Unions which were compelled to give such relief ought, *ipso facto*, to be entitled to a similar privilege. He wished to impress on the Committee the fact that the gift of out-door relief was to be the back-bone of the whole system under the Bill. There were districts where public works could not possibly be carried out, where there were no baronial sessions held, or where it would be difficult to hold them in time to give relief. He might call the attention of the Committee, for example, to districts named Pallysimon and Cahirnarry which were four or five miles outside the city which he had the honour to represent, and whose case was so bad that a member of the Board of Guardians, who was most conversant with the position of affairs there, in bringing it before the Board a few days ago, said that its condition was so wretched that it could scarcely be paralleled during the Famine of 1847 and never since. There was in that district no means of employment, and great distress prevailed. Now, if in places like that the people did not enjoy such advantages as the Amendment would confer, the system of relief provided by the Bill would, he was afraid, be extremely imperfect.

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY said, he desired to amend his Amendment by the insertion, after the words "every Union," of the words "or any part of a Union."

Mr. PAGET pointed out that those words were wider in their scope than those employed in the previous parts of the Bill.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER also objected to the insertion of the words "or any part of a union," considering that they would be inconsistent with the 3rd clause, which the Committee had already passed.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY said, he would not, in these circumstances, ask the Committee to adopt them.

Amendment to proposed Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Amendment *agreed to.*

Mr. BIGGAR moved, in page 2, lines 31 and 32, to leave out the words "of such of the electoral divisions in the union." In proposing the Amendment he was, he said, simply advocating the principle for which he had contended in the discussions on the earlier stages of the Bill. In his opinion, the Union should be the area over which the rates should be levied; and the re-payment of money borrowed ought not, he maintained, to be thrown entirely on poor electoral districts, which might not be able to refund it in a great number of years.

MR. FINIGAN said, he had much pleasure in supporting the Amendment, and trusted the Government would accede to it. The just demands of Irish Members ought, he thought, to be met by at least some concessions on the part of the Government, so that they might show that they were not bent on passing measures which were totally opposed to the wishes of the Irish people.

MR. J. LOWTHER opposed the Amendment, observing that it opened up the entire question of Union rating on which the Government did not think they would be justified in pronouncing a decision in a discussion raised incidentally on a Bill for the relief of distress in Ireland.

MR. HIBBERT said, he thought it would be necessary to make some alteration in the clause to meet that which had already been introduced in Clause 3 by the substitution of the word "in-door" for "out-door" relief.

MR. J. LOWTHER said, that if a verbal Amendment was required to make the clause consistent with the previous clause, he would take care that it should be introduced before the Report.

MR. SHAW thought it was very material that the Amendment suggested by the hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. Hibbert) should be made.

MR. BIGGAR contended that, entirely irrespective of the question of Union or divisional rating, the proper locality on which to levy a rate under the operation of the clause was the Union at large.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. GIBSON) said, the Government had accepted the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork, which was in the nature of a compromise, for it did not go to the whole extent of Union rating.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. SHAW moved, in page 2, line 39, to leave out the word "ten," in order to insert the word "thirty." In the case of the Lancashire loan, he said, the power of borrowing money for a period not exceeding 30 years was given, and he saw no reason why the period should not be equally long in the case of Ireland. Ten years was a very short period, in his opinion, for the re-payment of the loans under the Bill.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 39, to leave out the word "ten," in order to insert the word "thirty."—(*Mr. Shaw.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'ten' stand part of the Clause."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER was sorry he could not assent to the proposal to extend the time, which he thought, as prescribed by the Bill, was sufficiently long.

MR. SYNAN said, the right hon. Gentleman had given no reason for the difference between the 30 years which were allowed to sanitary authorities for the re-payment of loans, and the 10 years only allowed to the Board of Guardians for the same purpose, than that this difference was necessary in the interests of posterity. He (Mr. Synan) could see no reason whatever in that, and thought that the obligation which was binding upon one body to re-pay in a certain time should also be binding on the other; but, according to the right hon. Gentleman, in the interest of posterity one was to have 30 years for re-payment and the other only 10. With respect to posterity, he thought that the Board of Guardians were entitled to charge it just as much as were the sanitary authorities and the landed proprietors. Suppose the loans of the Board of Guardians made the rates in any districts bankrupt, would it not be reasonable to extend the time for re-payment to 20 or 30 years? What was the difference between giving money to Lancashire for the support of the poor, and giving money to Ireland, through the Guardians, for the support of the poor? With respect to giving them time for re-payment, it made no difference whether the money was applied to works in Lancashire, or whether it was applied in the shape of out-door relief or in the shape of public works in Ireland. Instead of there being any distinction which could be urged as a reason against extending the time for the Boards of Guardians, he thought that the reason which had been given was plainly in their favour, because the public got a benefit in the shape of works. Under those circumstances, he hoped they would get from the Treasury some more satisfactory answer, and that they would accept the Amendment of his hon. Friend in some form, if not by extending the period to 30 years.

Mr. SHAW was afraid the right hon. Gentleman had hardly understood the effect of the Amendment. There were in his own county presented works, the charge for which amounted to 1*s.* 6*d.* in the pound for 10 years; that was from the presented works alone. He was quite sure that in that very district there would be a large amount of taxation under this clause, some of which could not be paid. So that if the right hon. Gentleman proposed to retain the 10 years for re-payment he was certain to lose money extensively. Besides, Irish Members would have to come to Parliament in a few years' time to say that this whole district was going into bankruptcy, and to ask for an extension of time. He maintained that the loans for sanitary purposes in towns being made for the extended period, the loans for feeding the poor people of Ireland and for keeping them alive ought to be equally extended with regard to the time of re-payment. It struck him that the Government hardly realized the extent of the calamity which was impending over some parts of Ireland; and, therefore, he trusted that they would extend the time for re-payment, so that the burden upon the taxpayer might fall more lightly.

Mr. J. LOWTHER said, that the difference of time for the re-payment of these different classes of loans was apportioned, not according to the class of persons or public bodies borrowing the money, but according to the class of works to be performed with the money so borrowed. He pointed out that the land improvements and sanitary works were of a more permanent character than out-door relief. With regard to land improvements, these works had to be certified as being of a character which would confer benefit on the property for the time over which the loan would have to run. He thought the hon. Member had erred in respect of the time in which the loans for this class of works were repayable, the term for which was laid down at 15 years. It was not considered right that a district should have the power of burdening itself for the re-payment of loans for an indefinite period.

Mr. SYNAN reminded the right hon. Gentleman that he did not want an indefinite period. The Circular of the 22nd of November, relating to loans to sanitary authorities, fixed the time of re-payment at 30 years, and the interest at 1 per cent. He knew of three or four cases in his own county where this rule had been applied.

Mr. SHAW said, that 10 years was a most unreasonably short period for re-payment, because it would take three or four years of this time for the poor people to recover themselves from their present condition, and during that period the Government were about to hang a mill-stone of debt around their necks which might amount to 1*s.* 6*d.* in the pound for public works alone, and which would be in addition to the ordinary county rates and poor rates. In fact, it would amount to a total of taxation that would be crushing to the people, while in the small country towns it would be more crushing still.

Question put,

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 153; Noes 47: Majority 106.—(Div. List, No. 14.)

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 5 (Power of Board of Works to lend).

Mr. SHAW said, there was an Amendment on the Paper in the name of his hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Cork County (Colonel Colthurst) to reduce the rate of interest upon loans to Boards of Guardians from 3½ per cent to 1 per cent. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer insisted upon re-payment in 10 years, he thought he might agree to the smaller rate of interest, because the people of Ireland had a burden coming upon them for re-payment at a very short period. He begged leave to move to leave out from page 3, line 18, the words "three and a-half," in order to insert the word "one."

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 17, to leave out the words "three and a-half," in order to insert the word "one."—(*Mr. Shaw.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'three and a-half' stand part of the Clause."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, that the Government had no idea, in framing this Bill, that the money should be advanced from the Public Works Loan Fund upon terms which might be called "alms-giving." No doubt the advances to be made ought to be made, and were always intended to be made at the regular rate for advances from the Public Works Fund. The character of the measure would be altogether changed by substituting 1 per cent for the ordinary rate of 3½ per cent. He did not think it would be at all possible to accept the Amendment of the hon. Member.

MR. SYNAN did not think that there was any force in the argument of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the character of the measure would be altogether changed by simply altering the rate of interest from 3½ per cent to 1 per cent. The money which was to be got from the Irish Church Surplus Fund was to be advanced at 1 per cent. But Her Majesty's Government had no objection to make the Irish people pay, and to make them losers of the interest on the money to be given from the Royal Treasury of England—the English people were so poor, and in such a state of bankruptcy, that they could not afford to advance their money at a less rate than 3½ per cent; but in one case it was Irish money and must be given for nothing, while in the other case it was Imperial money, and must, therefore, be advanced at interest. He supposed the financial arrangements of the Budget would be disturbed if the money were lent at the lower rate of interest.

MR. FINIGAN said, it would be a sad thing if the people of Ireland in this exceptional time of misfortune knew that the money that came out of the Consolidated Fund would have to be paid for at the rate of 3½ per cent, while 1 per cent only was charged upon the money which came out of the Irish Church Surplus Fund. He thought it would become the Government, and, at all events, showed that the English people, through their Representatives, were inclined to treat Ireland as justly and equitably out of the Consolidated Fund as the Irish people were treated out of their own fund. They had been for a long time discussing the Bill; it was now late, and he hoped the Government would give way. His personal opinion of the Bill was that it was a very sad one as it stood, and he would like to see it improved, and particularly with regard to the amount of interest which the Government proposed, wrongly, as he believed, to charge upon the Irish people. He trusted that the Irish people might really feel that the Government were anxious to do something at this period of distress for the people of Ireland of an exceptional and favourable character, and for this reason he trusted the Government would give way and accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork.

SIR PATRICK O'BRIEN believed that the Government wished to do all in their power to mitigate the distress in Ireland; and for what they had attempted to do in reference to this Bill, he, for one, gave them his humble thanks. He put it to the Head of the Government, whether it would not be a becoming thing for them to give way upon that occasion, and not to ask for this increased amount of interest? The question of purse was one which actuated people in Ireland as well as in England, and he was quite aware that many persons in Ireland would say—"We are likely to be saddled with a considerable sum for the relief of the poor;" and when they saw that they were likely to have to pay a considerable rate of interest on the loans advanced for this purpose they might decline to accept them. Her Majesty's Government were taking action to relieve the distress in Ireland; and he appealed to them to look beyond small matters of this kind, and not to say that small farmers in Ireland should have the right to decide whether or not they would take up these loans. He thought that, upon a question of this character in that House, he had a right to look beyond Boards of Guardians; and he wished to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland and the Attorney General for Ireland, who were more especially charged with the conduct of this measure, and who were more conversant with the mode in which it was likely to be administered, whether they did not think that, in the interests of the poor of Ireland, they ought to regard what was likely to be done in their behalf? For his own part, and he said it with shame, in some places there were certain persons connected with the Poor Law administration, who would look only to the narrow regard of how far they were likely to save themselves. Such a small question as that of this difference of interest was not for the consideration of the Imperial Parliament; the question was how far they could do away with the distress in Ireland, and whether the Irish Members had not a right to appeal to Her Majesty's Government; and in this sense he did appeal to the Leader of the House to say whether it was for the Government to hesitate about this question of interest. The remarks which he had made concerning the Boards of Guardians in Ireland were not likely to increase his popularity. He wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the statement made by the hon. Member for Cork was not worthy of consideration, and whether it was right to spend the night in fighting over questions of 3½ and 1 per cent interest at a time when the actual existence of the people had to be considered? He had given the Government no opposition upon this Bill in any possible form; on the contrary, he had given them his humble support in the measures that had been introduced. He did not think that there was any Gentleman in the House, be he Whig or Tory, who would not say that the first question to be considered in this matter was the preservation of life; and he trusted that before a new Parliament met in that House it would not be remembered by hon. Members opposite that they had opposed the simple request on the part of the Irish Members to fix the rate of interest at the amount which had been taken on former occasions.

Mr. BIGGAR said, if he had understood rightly the statement of the Government, it was not intended to lend money under the Bill in the form of charity. But, if he were not mistaken, the money was to be lent to the landowners at 1 per cent. The money was to be lent to the landowners at 1 per cent from the Irish Church Surplus Fund. Thus the landowners would get money on charity terms, although, doubtless, they would not like to be told so. It seemed to him that the occupying tenants ought to be treated in the same way as the landowners, and also get money at 1 per cent.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said, he would like to know what the Government of this country had ever given to Ireland? Had it ever given a single pound? For many years £3,000,000 a-year had been taken from Ireland in the shape of taxes, and nothing had ever been given back. It might be said that Ireland paid no more in taxes than England; but it should be remembered that a very heavy tax was levied on an article which was consumed in Ireland in greater quantities than it was in England. But while thousands of pounds had been contributed from America to help the starving peasantry in Ireland, yet not a single shilling had been contributed by Her Majesty's Government. The National Debt Commissioners were getting money from the public at 2½ per cent, and yet the Government wanted to charge the suffering people in Ireland 3½ per cent. Thus, in place of Ireland getting nothing, the Government proposed that it should be made to pay a profit of 1 per cent.

Mr. J. LOWTHER begged to inform the hon. Gentleman that the Government had become responsible for very considerable sums for the relief of distress in Ireland. It was not fair to say that the landowners were the only persons who were entitled to obtain advances at 1 per cent, for sanitary authorities and the baronial sessions were equally entitled to those liberal terms. The principle on which they had drawn the distinction between 3½ per cent and 1 per cent was that persons who were not obliged to borrow money, but to whom it was necessary to offer an inducement for so doing, should be allowed to have it at 1 per cent. But to those persons to whom it was not necessary to offer inducements, the Government could only grant it at 3½ per cent.

Sir PATRICK O'BRIEN would have thought that both English and Scotch Members would have joined in urging the Government to grant money for the relief of distress in Ireland at 1 per cent interest; and he should have thought that, under the exceptional circumstances of the case, the Government would have accepted the proposition. He should have thought that every hon. Member, irrespective of his politics, would not huckster over a question of the lives of the people, and that a small matter of this kind would not be made a battle-ground, when the object was to relieve

—he would not say a famine, but the extreme and great destitution in Ireland.

MR. SHAW observed, that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland seemed disposed to exaggerate the liability of the Imperial Government. They had become responsible for £500,000 for two years. He did not object to the loans which the Government had already promised to the landowners, because the money would go into the country, and every class of the community would benefit. With respect to the Amendment, there were several reasons why he did not wish to take a division. In asking permission to withdraw his Amendment, he could not help remarking that a very strong argument had been offered for Home Rule. Every step from the beginning of the Session had had the effect of putting arguments into their mouths of the strongest character in favour of Home Rule. The arguments of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer simply came to this—that he liked to borrow at a low rate of interest for a long period, and to lend at a high rate of interest for a short period. Those arguments did not commend themselves to the sympathy of Irishmen when applied to the relief of distress in their country. He begged to withdraw his Amendment.

MR. BIGGAR observed, that the hon. and gallant Member for County Cork (Colonel Colthurst) and the hon. Member for Dungarvan had both given Notice of the same Amendment. He had been asked by the latter Gentleman to move his Amendment. He did not feel that the arguments which had been adduced by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary carried conviction to his own mind, nor did he think they would to the minds of his hon. Friends. He objected, therefore, to the withdrawal of the Amendment; and he was sure that the hon. Member for Dungarvan would himself have strongly objected to that course.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 141; Noes 38: Majority 103.—(Div. List, No. 15.)

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 6 (Repayment of loans made by the Board of Works) *agreed to.*

Clause 7 (Orders for payment of loans may be made by Local Government Board) *agreed to.*

Clause 8 (Confirmation of expenditure by Guardians and indemnity) *agreed to.*

Clause 9 (Validation of loans).

MR. FINIGAN moved, in page 4, line 27, to insert after the word "owners," the words "occupying tenants." This Amendment of his raised a most important question as to loans to occupiers; and as they had now been eight hours in Committee, and the question at issue was one which required very careful consideration, he should, if he could obtain any support, divide the House and insist on reporting Progress.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Finigan.*)

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. GIBSON) really thought, if the hon. Gentleman would look at the Amendment he had proposed, he would see that it was not susceptible of discussion. The clause did not refer to any loans, but merely dealt with the past, and referred to what had been done. The clause did not propose to take any powers for the future, but merely recited what had already been done by the Government, and asked the House to approve of it. He was sure the hon. Gentleman, after that explanation, would see that it was not necessary to make the Amendment he suggested.

MR. FINIGAN said, as the question was one which must be raised further on and would require a great deal of consideration, he would withdraw his Motion.

Motion and Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. BIGGAR moved, in page 5, line 35, after the word "loan," to insert the words—

> "Always providing, That no portion of such loan shall be expended in connection with the consolidation of any existing holdings of land, or causing the termination of any holding or holdings of land; and further providing, That in any action for compensation for disturbance brought or hereafter to be brought by any tenant of land in Ireland under the provisions of 'The Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Act, 1870,' any claim of an owner of land, in consequence of improvements effected with any loan granted under this Act, to demand an increase

of rent calculated at a higher rate per centum than the rate per centum at which such loan had been granted to such owner of land, shall be deemed and held to be a demand for an exorbitant rent within the meaning of the provisions of 'The Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Act, 1870.' "

He moved the Amendment on the part of his hon. Friend the Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell), in whose name it stood, and who was at that time temporarily absent. One of the strongest contentions of the opponents, or, he would rather say, the critics, of this Bill—for there had been no opposition to it, though there had been much severe criticism—was to give power to landowners to borrow money on the security of the Church Surplus Fund at a very low rate of interest, and to help the landlords with unlimited power of loan-raising, in consequence of these improvements. That, in his opinion, was a totally unfair principle. The landlord would be able to borrow public money at exceptionally low rates—for 1 per cent must be considered to be an exceptionally low rate—and, at the same time, he would be empowered to charge the tenants on his property whatever increased rent he pleased for those very improvements. The Amendment really only carried out the principle already laid down by the Landlord and Tenant Act—that was, that if a landlord asked an exorbitant rent the Court could decide that it was practically dispossessing the tenant, and could give him compensation for disturbance.

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. J. LOWTHER said, he was quite at a loss to understand what was meant by the words in the Amendment, "in connection with the consolidation of any existing holdings of land." He was not aware under what section of this Bill money borrowed under it could be laid out in the consolidation of the holdings. Without going into the whole question, however, he would say the Government was prepared to accept the first portion of the Amendment down to the word "land," and the Amendment so accepted would be the 1st Proviso.

Mr. SYNAN said, he was unable to accept the Amendment, although he entirely agreed in its principle, for the simple reason that it did not hit the blot, and would not remedy the grievance of which he complained. The question of exorbitant rents under the Landlord and Tenant Act was raised in the 9th clause, which enacted that a Judge might treat the demand for an exorbitant rent as a disturbance of the tenant. But the clause was confined to holdings under the value of £15; and surely his hon. Friend did not intend to limit the remedy proposed in his Amendment in that way. His hon. Friend the Member for Dungarvan had already called the attention of the House to this matter by a Question he had put that very evening, which showed that a landowner in Derry who served notices upon his tenants informing them that they would be required to pay 5 per cent for any improvements he might make on their holdings, while, at the same time, he was getting the money for those improvements on the security of the Irish Church Fund at 1 per cent. Under the Drainage (Ireland) Act, the increase of rents arising from such improvements might be left to the discretion of the Commissioners of Public Works. Upon the application of the proprietors they were at liberty to make an award if they thought there should be an increase of rent consequent upon the improvement, and when made that award was to be endorsed upon the lease, and if the tenant had no lease, then the award was made separately, and the amount was added to his rent. If, however, they thought from the peculiar circumstances of the case, or from the whole property being too high, they were quite at liberty to refuse to put any increase whatever upon the tenant. Now, under the present Bill, the landlord would be able to borrow money at 1 per cent; and unless there was some provision of the kind suggested, he would be able to turn round upon the tenant and charge him 5 per cent—as had, indeed, already been done in the case quoted that evening. For his part, he preferred carrying out this suggestion as one Amendment. The effect of it was that the landlord would borrow the money, and the tenant would get the benefit of the loan, and the Commissioners of Public Works would decide what the increase should be under the circumstances. He might mention that in his own case a loan had been often drawn without any increase of rent being cast upon the tenants. But that, of course, was an exceptional circumstance; and the Amendment, as he proposed it, certainly met the grievance. He hoped, therefore, his hon. Friend would accept this Amendment, because his own, as he had already pointed out, only hit the blot to the extent of tenants under £15. With respect to the other part of his Amendment, he was prepared to postpone it; but he would take the sense of the Committee on the first part before he would decide what he would do with the second.

MR. BIGGAR said, these were not his own Amendments, and, in point of fact, he never read them at all until he read the Amendment in question in moving it. At the same time, he must confess the early part of it seemed to him to involve a principle that ought to be carried out—namely, that landlords should not borrow money and use it in consolidating holdings, and so getting rid of the tenants.

MR. J. LOWTHER remarked, that that could not be done under the Lands Improvement Act.

MR. BIGGAR replied, that a landlord might, at any rate, make small fields into large ones, and make other improvements which were not so desirable as improvements to the land. It seemed to him that a very important principle was involved in the Amendment of his hon. Friend the Member for Dungarvan; but as that hon. Gentleman was now present, he was rather disposed to think that, as he was the author of the Amendment, he had better fight it out for himself.

MR. O'DONNELL observed, that in placing this Amendment on the Paper, he did it less for the purpose of bringing this particular Amendment to the notice of the Committee than for the purpose of ventilating an acknowledged blot in the Relief Bill. He observed, however, that the Amendment of the hon. Member for the County Limerick (Mr. Synan) went further, and was more thorough than his own; and, on the present occasion, he might fairly complain that he had been guilty of the rare merit of moderation in dealing with this subject. He was not sure, however, that moderation in this case was a merit, because he desired most absolutely and thoroughly to prevent the public money being granted in loans on lands, and the land being made use of for throwing improper burdens on the tenants. They were to help the landlords to keep the people from starving; but the landlords themselves or their friends ought to be very careful to guard against even the suspicion of a desire to take an undue advantage of these loans of public money; and it would, of course, be monstrous that after receiving a loan at 1 per cent they should charge their tenants 5 or 6 per cent for it. If an amicable arrangement was made between landlord and tenant, that, of course, would be quite fair; but if the matter came to a fight before the local tribunal, they ought to take care that the tenant had the power of defending himself, and ought not to be forced to pay more than his landlord paid for the use of the money. He would prefer to leave his Amendment in the hands of the Leader of their Party (Mr. Shaw). His hon. Friend, when he mentioned his intention of placing this Amendment on the Notice Paper, approved of it, and said he should call attention to the subject himself also. Something clearly must be done; and the hon. Member for Cork, with his great experience and his acknowledged position as the Head of their Party, was the best person to decide upon which of those Amendments they should fight.

MR. SHAW understood the Government accepted the first part of the Amendment of his hon. Friend the Member for Limerick (Mr. Synan); and, for his part, he could see no reason why they should not accept the second part also.

THE CHAIRMAN asked if the Amendment moved by the hon. Member for Cavan was withdrawn?

MR. O'DONNELL said, he would withdraw his in favour of the Amendment of his hon. Friend the Member for the County of Limerick.

THE CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Amendment was moved by the hon. Member for the County of Cavan (Mr. Biggar).

MR. FINIGAN said, his hon. Friend had gone out for a moment; but he believed he was perfectly willing to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. SYNAN said, the Amendment he had to propose was at page 5, line 35, after the word "loan," to insert these words—

> "Provided always, That in any award for increase of rent to be made by the Commissioners of Public Works (Ireland) under the said Acts, the increase, if any, so awarded shall not exceed the yearly rent charge payable by the owner for such loan."

That was a slight alteration of the terms of his Amendment as it originally stood; but the Committee would see it was necessary in order to carry out its intention.

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. GRAY regretted the alteration which had been made, because, as he understood it, the landlord was now to add not merely the interest, but also the instalments of principal, to the rent of the tenant. The result would be that after the loan was paid off the landlord would have for nothing the profit of the transaction. ["No, no!"] Surely the equitable thing was that the tenant should only pay the interest, because the improvement remained as a permanent increase to the value of the property of the landlord. Therefore, the tenant should not pay both principal and interest.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Gibson) said, the hon. Member for Limerick was quite correct in altering his Amendment as he had done, because, unless it was so altered, it might appear that the tenant was to pay the interest twice over.

Mr. SYNAN said, it was so. The amount to be paid would be the interest on the sum sufficient to repay the principal. If the interest was £3 8*s.* 6*d.*, and the rent charged £1, instead of paying £3 8*s.* 6*d.* the tenant would way £4 8*s.* 6*d.* Really the alteration he had made in his Amendment was in favour of the tenant. He hoped his hon. Friend (Mr. Gray) would understand the matter now he had explained it by figures.

Mr. GRAY replied, that he was, undoubtedly, very dull of apprehension; but he was still unable to understand the exact meaning of the Amendment. Was the amount to which the rent was to be increased to include the instalments of the principal, or was it not? If the increase represented the interest alone, that was strictly equitable, of course; but if it included also the yearly instalments for the re-payment of the loan spread over a certain period, the result would be to give the entire profit of the improvement after the extinction of the loan to the landlord for nothing. Of course, his hon. Friend might be correct, and he himself be suffering from a misapprehension; but he only wanted to know what was the exact meaning of the Amendment, and what was to be the sum the yearly tenant was to pay.

Mr. SYNAN replied, that he proposed what the words of his Amendment conveyed—that the tenant should pay for 35 years what the landlord was liable to pay. After the 35 years a new arrangement would be made for the land; and nobody could, of course, say what at that time might be necessary. But if his hon. Friend (Mr. Gray) would add words saying that after the 35 years the tenant should pay nothing at all of the principal or interest he would be quite satisfied to concur with him; but he apprehended that any proposition to decide now what should be done 35 years hence would be hardly likely to receive much consideration from the House. That was, at all events, not a subject upon which they were likely to come to any satisfactory conclusion. For that reason he had not said what was to happen after the expiration of that time.

Mr. FINIGAN moved to report Progress, and said, a very difficult question was raised here; and he quite agreed with his hon. Friend the Member for Tipperary (Mr. Gray) that if the tenant was to pay both principal and interest this clause was a very unequitable one, and should be very strongly opposed.

Mr. GRAY hoped the Committee would not think him obstructive; but it seemed to him that the Amendment, as it originally stood, was quite clear. Then, the rate to the tenant was not to exceed the rate of interest payable by the owner. If, therefore, his hon. Friend would leave his Amendment as it was first put upon the Paper, it would convey precisely what the law meant—that the tenant should pay the interest only, and not the instalments of the principal.

Mr. J. LOWTHER observed, that the hon. Member had misapprehended the principle under which these loans were given. Re-payment of the loans was spread over as long a period as the Treasury thought the improvements would last, and the idea that the landlord would get the benefit which the tenant had provided for him was not the fact. The principle upon which these loans were made was this—that the repayment should run over a period of as long as it was calculated the improvements would last. If the improvement was supposed to last for 35 years, the loan was spread over 35 years; and at the end of that time, or thereabouts, it was calculated that the outlay would have ceased to benefit the land. Therefore, the proposal that the tenant should pay the instalments as well as the interest was perfectly fair; and the suggestion that the tenant, during 35 years, should have the full benefit of the improvements, and should only pay the interest, while the landlord should be forced to discharge the sinking fund, would be preposterous and most unjust.

MR. GRAY imagined that drainage was a matter within the terms of the Land Improvement Act. He understood that the right hon. Gentleman was willing to accept an Amendment by which the tenant should only pay the interest, and not the principal, in loans of a permanent character.

MR. P. MARTIN would like some little explanation of the meaning of the Amendment. It seemed to him, according to the words now used, to confer no benefit on the tenant. The tenant would, by instalments levied from him, be obliged to pay the entire principal and interest; yet that landlord would, in the end, become entitled to the benefit and advantage of the improvement. No provision either appeared to be made in it for the case of a tenant who might be evicted after the first two or three years, and who yet had paid the instalments in liquidation of the principal. If the Committee passed that Amendment as it stood it appeared to him they were leaving the tenant to pay both principal and interest, and yet leaving the landlord eventually in possession of the improvements.

MR. SYNAN said, that during the term for which the landlords had to borrow the money the tenant had to pay instalments; and he had prepared the Amendment for the purpose of saving the tenant being charged 5 per cent while the landlord was getting the money. In fact, he wished to give the tenant the difference between £3 8*s.* 6*d.* and 5 per cent. If the clause stood in its present form, the landlord would borrow the money at the former rate, and make the tenant pay 5 per cent for it.

MR. P. MARTIN observed, that if the clause ran "shall not exceed the rate of interest payable by the owner for such loan," then it would be plain and simple; but, as it was, the Act imposed upon the tenant the entire payment both of principal and interest.

MR. SHAW said, that the Amendment was proposed from their anxiety to save the tenants from being overcharged; and, so far as he could judge, the Amendment protected them.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Words *inserted.*

MR. SYNAN said, that the right hon. Gentleman seemed to think that the first part of the Amendment relating to awards by the Commissioners of Public Works under the Act of 1870 was quite sufficient protection to the tenant; but the right hon. Gentleman must know as well as he did that no real original power was given to the Public Works Commissioners at all. It was in the power of the landlord, after the improvements had been done upon his property by means of loans obtained at 1 per cent, to give the tenant notice to quit, and he would then be in possession of improvements made from Irish money, and the tenant was thus completely at the mercy of his landlord. The tenant could not compel the Commissioners of Public Works to give him a lease of his holding for 35 years. All that the Commissioners could do was to insure that his rent was not increased during the time that he remained a tenant. In order, therefore, to give the tenant protection, he had framed the following further Amendment:—

> "Provided further, That in any claim hereafter to be made for compensation by any tenant for disturbance under the provisions of 'The Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Act, 1870,' the county court judge, in adjudicating upon the amount of compensation to be awarded to such tenant, shall not be at liberty to reduce same by reason of any improvements made by loans under this Act."

Under the present administration of the law in Ireland, a County Court Judge was at liberty to take into consideration the improvements made by the landlord and the enjoyment of those improvements by the tenant. His object was to give the tenant the benefit of those improvements, in order to secure the full maximum of compensation to which he was entitled for disturbance. For that purpose, he provided that the landlord should not be entitled to reduce the compensation to be awarded to the tenant by reason of any improvements made by loans under the Act.

Amendment proposed,

After the words last added, to add the words "Provided further, That in any claim hereafter to be made for compensation by any tenant for disturbance under the provisions of 'The Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Act, 1870,' the county court judge, in adjudicating upon the amount of compensation to be awarded to such tenant, shall not be at liberty to reduce same by reason of any improvements made by loans under this Act."—(*Mr. Synan.*)

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Gibson) did not understand the meaning of the Amendment of the hon. Member. The principle of awarding compensation for disturbance was that if the County Court Judge was satisfied that the case was one in which he should award compensation he could give the maximum of seven years' rent. He could not see how, upon the construction of the Amendment, any Court could make such a deduction as was suggested. It was provided that any County Court Judge, in adjudicating upon the amount of compensation to be awarded, should not be at liberty to reduce the same by reason of any improvements made by loans under this Act. He was not aware how a Judge could make such a deduction. He was aware of no process by which that could be done. In his opinion, the previous Amendment was fair and reasonable, and his right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary had at once assented to it. He thought that that Amendment was quite sufficient to meet the case. After that explanation to the Committee, he trusted that the Amendment would be withdrawn, and that they would be allowed to proceed with the clause.

Mr. SYNAN remarked, that the County Court Judge, in awarding compensation, could not exceed a certain maximum, but might not or need not come up to that maximum. There might be a case in which a tenant had enjoyed improvements for 20 years. In his own mind the Judge might go through a process of reasoning by which he would reduce the maximum of compensation by reason of the tenant's enjoyment for 20 years. He could not enter into the inner consciousness of the Judge, and he wished to make the matter perfectly clear by a declaration of the House in the Bill that the compensation was not to be reduced by any such process of reasoning. He wished to lay down a certain rule by which the tenant should receive the maximum compensation to which he was entitled.

The O'DONOGHUE said, that as the Bill had been under consideration for nine hours, and involved matters of great importance, he felt it his duty to move to report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*The O'Donoghue.*)

Mr. J. LOWTHER hoped that the hon. Gentleman would not persist in his Motion. With the exception of a verbal Amendment of his right hon. Colleague the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Amendment they were then discussing was the last on the Paper. It had been very fully discussed by the Committee, and there was but one new clause to be proposed. He should suggest that the Committee should then go through the Bill, and that it should be re-printed as amended, and that hon. Members should then move any Amendments they wished to make with the amended Bill in their hands.

Mr. BIGGAR trusted that the Committee would not adopt the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman, as the hon. Member for Tralee very justly said they had been in Committee nine hours upon the Bill. He was physically unable to continue the discussion of the Bill at that time, and he hoped that Progress would be reported. The hon. Member was then referring to the provisions of the Bill which had been brought in during the present Session, when——

The CHAIRMAN reminded the hon. Member that he would be out of Order in discussing the provisions of any Bill set down for discussion on a future day before the House.

Mr. BIGGAR remarked, that he had not intended to offer any arguments for or against the measure in question; but he had simply alluded to it as bearing upon the question before the Committee. He intended to move two additional clauses to this Bill, and he did not like the responsibility of doing so at that late hour. It was physically impossible for him to continue the argument at that time, as he was very much worn out. His experience was that business done at that hour was very badly done.

SIR PATRICK O'BRIEN said, that this was a very exceptional Bill which had been brought in from very exceptional causes. When it was considered that that Bill affected the vitality of a nation, they ought not to be deterred from pursuing their work by the lateness of the hour. When they considered the distress which existed in Ireland, it seemed to him that this measure was one of the greatest possible urgency. They had been told that unless they continued the discussion at that time the Bill would be postponed. He should regret the postponement of the Bill as a calamity to his country, and by all means let them proceed with the discussion. For his part, if it were necessary to sit till 4 or 5 in the morning, he should be happy to do so.

MR. SHAW hoped they might be able to carry out the suggestion of the Treasury Bench. The Bill was an important one, and as the Government thought it so, he and his Friends certainly ought not to take from their shoulders the responsibility of passing the measure. As to the Amendment, his own mind was not very clear. He did not think it was necessary, and he was fortified in that opinion by the statement of the Attorney General for Ireland—whom alone, of course, they would not trust—but who was corroborated by two legal Gentlemen of their own Party whom they did trust; and all these Gentlemen agreed that this was not such a point as they could not leave for the Report. The other two Amendments ran very much in the same line as that he had proposed to make; and he hoped before the Report came on the Chancellor of the Exchequer would reconsider the question, and if it were brought up in a more modified tone that they would be able to proceed further than they had gone that night. With regard to the last Amendment, that proposed by his hon. Friend the Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar), he looked upon that as one of very considerable importance indeed, for it provided that farmers should not be disqualified as electors because they had received relief provided by this Bill. He did not think the Government would seriously persist in their opposition to that clause.

MR. BIGGAR observed, that he was always in favour of having a Bill properly considered; and no amount of talking would make him alter his opinion that proposals could not be satisfactorily examined at such an hour as that. He had not heard anything from his hon. friend (Mr. Shaw) to make him alter his opinion; but if the Government would accept his other Amendment, he would postpone the one he had now to bring forward until the Report. If, however, they refused to agree, then he could not undertake the responsibility of arguing them at that hour. It was, however, evident from the speech of the hon. Baronet (Sir Patrick O'Brien) that Members of the House were not in such a frame of mind as thoroughly to fit them for the consideration of this question; and, therefore, if the Government did not accept his proposal, he should ask his hon. Friend to go to a division, and if in that division they were beaten he should consider it his duty to move a similar Motion. He really would appeal to the Government not to press them to go on at such a late hour as that. It was perfectly impossible to carry such a proposition into operation. If the Government would postpone the further consideration of that Bill, then he did not see why they should not put it down for the next day, and appeal to the hon. Gentleman the Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) to postpone his Motion, which stood first for the next evening. If they would take that Bill at the Sitting of the House the next day, he would himself undertake to rise in his place and make the appeal. It was most unreasonable, he thought, to ask them to continue work at that hour.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I am afraid I cannot hold out to the hon. Member any assurance that we will accept the 2nd clause—in regard to the electoral franchise—of which he has given Notice. That would deserve consideration and discussion; but he will have an opportunity, if the suggestion thrown out be adopted, of moving it on Report and having it discussed then. I hope the Committee may still —without losing more time in discussing whether they will or will not go on—be able to complete the clauses of this Bill. I am afraid there is not much chance of getting it on at the next Sitting. Our encouragement to make an appeal to the hon. Member for North Warwickshire is not very great, when we remember the result of an appeal we made to an hon. Member the other night to set aside other Business in order to get on with this Bill. Of course, however, we shall be anxious to take the Bill as soon as we can. I cannot tell whether we can take it on Monday, because it may be necessary to take Supply. It is, therefore, really of great importance that we should not lose this evening. Members opposite have it in their own hands. They see how the matter stands, and no time must be lost in regard to the clauses now remaining for discussion.

Sir PATRICK O'BRIEN hoped the right hon. Gentleman would make a definite statement with regard to the clauses providing that persons should not be disfranchised in consequence of their receiving relief. If the right hon. Gentleman would state that the admitted principle of that clause—for this was a purely exceptional case, arising from a visitation of Providence—although he could not speak for other Gentlemen around him, he had a very strong opinion that they would be disposed to allow the Bill to go through as quickly as possible, and prevent any further fruitless discussion.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: That was the one clause I referred to, and I cannot make any such promise. It may be discussed when it is brought forward; but it is of a serious character, involving serious considerations, and I cannot make the promise asked for.

Major O'BEIRNE said, then he should decidedly be in favour of reporting Progress, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not give the promise asked for with regard to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cavan. That Amendment was of the very highest importance, because if it were not made the Bill would disfranchise every Liberal elector in Ireland.

Mr. O'DONNELL said, after the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he should certainly do everything in his power to help his Friends to have this matter discussed in the broad light of day. If he understood rightly, the Government were going to use this money, now voted by Parliament for the relief of Irish distress, for the purpose of obtaining an electoral advantage in the approaching General Election. That was the interpretation he put upon the declaration of the Government, and that was a policy which must be fought out to the bitter end in the daylight, and that the debate on it must be dragged out as long as it could be dragged out, in accordance with the Forms of the House. If the Government meant to make use of this dire calamity and the fearful necessity of the Irish people, almost exclusively and entirely arising from the bad government of Ireland by England—and when he spoke of England he did not mean it in any evil sense; he meant England represented by the Tory Party—if Her Majesty's Government meant to make use of this money, voted to Ireland as extraordinary relief, in order to disqualify and disfranchise the electors of Ireland, then he declared that that policy must be exposed and debated in the full light of day.

The CHAIRMAN: I must point out to the hon. Member that although the Committee allows reference to be made to any subsequent clause to be discussed, on a Motion to report Progress it is not in Order to discuss any such clause. That must come on in due course.

Mr. O'DONNELL remarked, that he was discussing an intimation just given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and informed him and the Government that that declaration of policy would produce a corresponding change of front on their side. If that sort of strategy was to be indulged in towards their country, then it would become their duty to oppose that policy by every means in their power; and certainly it was not at that hour of the night that a policy of that kind would be allowed to be smuggled through the House, if constitutional opposition could prevent such a result.

Mr. J. LOWTHER would not follow the irrelevant turn the discussion had taken. He merely wished to point out that the reasons just given were no reasons in favour of reporting Progress at that point, because a new clause could be brought out equally well on the Report, and there was nothing to prevent their adoption of the suggestion of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw); and by disposing of this Amendment they might allow the Bill to be reprinted.

MR. BIGGAR replied, that he had some little experience of Public Business in that House, and that experience was that it was always a bad plan to defer such questions. He was there that night; but he might not be there next week. He might be dead then. He was anxious, therefore, to have an opportunity of discussing this question now rather than next week. He must confess also that he did not understand the details involved in the present intimation; and if he had an opportunity at the Sitting of the next day to hear the arguments of each side he might be able to form an opinion. He must really declare that he was perfectly incompetent to form an opinion then, and he believed that the great majority of the Members present had not the least idea as to the meaning of it—though they would, of course, vote as the Government told them. That was not the way in which such a matter should be decided. It should be decided after discussion and consideration, and after proper and impartial criticism of the merits of the question. He would not now refer to the two Amendments which he had himself proposed. He hardly remembered at that moment what they were about. It was not desirable he should take the trouble to think about them, because he was not going to discuss them; still he should like an opportunity to discuss them, because he thought they were thoroughly reasonable and based on sound principles, and in accordance with the principles of the Bill.

MR. LAW wished to appeal to hon. Members opposite whether they did not think the Opposition had now a right to go home. There were still some very important Amendments in the Bill, and one instanced by the hon. Baronet the Member for King's County was very important indeed—the question being whether the recipients of relief were to be disfranchised. It was quite obvious that a matter of that kind ought to be discussed in public, and not be settled on the Report. Hon. Gentlemen knew perfectly well that there was a great deal more restriction upon discussions on Report than upon discussions in Committee. He had an Amendment himself to propose at the end of Clause 14—namely, that the county cess which was to be levied for the repayment of these loans ought to be in the same position as the labour rate of 1847, in order to be imposed only on occupiers of over £4. In other words, he maintained that the precedent of 1847 might be followed, and the burden of these rates not cast upon the class of occupiers, who were very little removed from those who were themselves getting relief. Considering everything, he thought no time would be lost if the Government yielded to the appeal made to them. He did not see for himself why they should not have a Morning Sitting, and get a Committee through then, instead of wasting an hour or two now, and only arriving at the same result in the end. It was not desirable that they should discuss any question which should give rise to angry discussions or divisions at that hour of the morning; and it was of the greatest importance also that this Bill should be carried through with the greatest unanimity and good humour that was possible. He thought the Government might smooth matters over, and yet, in the way he had suggested, get the Business very quickly done. He, for himself, was ready to come down at 2 o'clock the next day.

SIR WILLIAM FRASER remarked, that a very large number of Government Members were present, and there was also present a large number of the Opposition. It seemed to him a very fitting opportunity to finish the discussion on the Bill. Time was everything with regard to this measure; and the people of Ireland were waiting for its passing.

MR. MONK said, he had taken no part in discussing this measure, and it was not his intention to do so; but he thought the announcement just sprung upon them by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer with regard to the clause affecting the electoral position of the unfortunate Irishmen who, in consequence of the visitation of Providence, were under the necessity of receiving relief, would make it utterly impossible for the Committee to go on and finish the Bill without a thorough discussion of that particular clause. If that discussion were postponed until the Report of the Bill, the clause could not be nearly so satisfactorily discussed as it would be in Committee. If the right hon. Gentleman would give way on that, hon. Gentlemen would probably consent to accept the rest.

Mr. SULLIVAN said, he had just heard an hon. and gallant Gentleman say that the present was an excellent hour for considering so important a Bill as this; and if his ears had not deceived him, he had heard two hon. Gentlemen cheer that statement who had previously explained the reason that they blocked the Bill of the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll), because half-past 12 was not the proper time to consider so important a matter. It would not be Parliamentary of him to say this was hypocrisy, and he would not say it was. The two statements were certainly irreconcilable. If 2 o'clock was an excellent time for discussing this most important measure, then what became of the excuse of the two hon. Gentlemen who stated that their reason for blocking a Bill was that half-past 12 was not the proper hour?

The CHAIRMAN: I must point out to the hon. and learned Gentleman that he is not in Order in referring to debates in the present Session.

Mr. SULLIVAN begged pardon, and asked the Committee to forget any reference he had made. He would assume that what had been stated was correct and orthodox in every way, and that this was an excellent time—at 2 o'clock—to discuss important Business. He would not refer to past debates, but to future debates; and he hoped they would soon hear the same doctrine when some other Gentleman got up and declared half-past 12 was an hour at which a Bill ought not to be brought forward. He had taken no part at present in this discussion; but it would be just as well for the Government to understand that if this Bill was a covert design on the eve of a General Election of disfranchising a mass of the people of Ireland, with the hope of giving some political advantage to one Party in that House, then it would be their most solemn duty to resort to every form of constitutional action allowed them in order to defend the franchise of their countrymen, and to take care that, under the pretence of relief, that House was not going to disfranchise those electors. The sooner the Government realized that the better. They, of course, were not being reported at that hour; but he had that faith in the good sense of the country and in the force of English public opinion, to believe that even England—which did not, as a rule, understand Irish questions, as they might, like themselves—would yet not allow the people to be disfranchised. He could not but believe that better counsels would prevail on the Treasury Bench. At present, a most exceptional state of things reigned in Ireland, and he could not believe it was intended to strike the people in that way. Considering, however, the gravity of the question now raised, he should certainly support the Motion for adjournment, which otherwise he should not have done; and if the Government had an idea that they would be driven, at an hour like that when they were exhausted, to discuss the question, they put upon them a most unhappy and a most unwelcome part. He appealed to the Government, therefore, not to drive them into a corner in that manner.

Sir PATRICK O'BRIEN did not wish to prolong the discussion. A few nights ago he had ventured to represent to the House that this was no Party measure, but a Bill introduced to deal with the distress in Ireland as rapidly as possible. He ventured a few moments ago to ask the right hon. Gentleman to make a statement with respect to a certain clause, in the hope of promoting concord. He regretted to find, however, that the right hon. Gentleman did not give him the answer he expected. The hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) had spoken of him in a manner which, perhaps, was not unusual to him. He must say, since he had had the honour of being a Member of that House, that the hon. Member for Cavan had been most civil to him on all occasions. That night, however, he had said he would not imitate him. He would not venture to do that; but he had said the hon. Member for King's County spoke in a peculiar fashion. Well, the *tu quoque* of argument would be improper on his part; but if he were to say the hon. Member for Cavan had spoken in a peculiar fashion, 19 out of 20 Members in the House would say, "Quite true, and we quite agree in it." Was it a proper thing, however, thus to attempt to make differences where they ought to have but one object—to look to the relief of the distress in Ireland? Was it proper, also, for the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to come forward and raise such a question as this, when they were dealing with the distress in Ireland? It was disgraceful for the Front Bench to raise this question of the franchise.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. Baronet will see, on consideration, that his phrase is not a correct one.

SIR PATRICK O'BRIEN: Well, Sir, you correct me, and I know you correct many persons here rather sharply.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: That is hardly the way, I think, to address our Chairman. I think the hon. Baronet has no intention of expressing himself disrespectfully to the Chairman in the Chair; but I think he ought to withdraw the expression.

SIR PATRICK O'BRIEN said, he would withdraw it at once, as he was told that he ought to do it; yet they knew he was not what was called "Saxon born," and that, therefore, he was not acquainted with the exact word he ought to use which was Parliamentary in reference to this; but the nearest word that he could use in Saxon phraseology he begged to apply to the decision of the Chairman. Now, he hoped he had set himself right with the Committee. He said so much; perhaps he had said too much. [*Loud cheers.*] Hon. Gentlemen might cheer him; but they forgot that he, as one of those who had endeavoured, as far as his humble power and his humble expression of opinion went, to promote the passage of this Bill, and that he made the appeals to his country people behind him to press on with it.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, they had been spending something like an hour discussing whether they should go on or not, and they might spend another hour in the same way. It was obvious there was no use in so proceeding; and, therefore, probably the best course would be to agree to report Progress. He wished very much, however, to say one word. Hon. Gentlemen had gone off very much at score with regard to a particular clause. He expressed no opinion with regard to it, except that it was an important point which required consideration, and he merely suggested that it might be fairly discussed on the Report.

MAJOR O'GORMAN believed there was no indisposition on the part of hon. Members on the other side to continue the discussion of the Bill; but he thought the Government should immediately made a pronouncement on this question. He understood that Her Majesty's Government intended to deprive of the franchise the poor people who were now requesting aid; but unless he heard that definitely stated he would not believe it, and he would never believe it till then. It could not be the intention of the Government, nor of any hon. Member sitting behind Her Majesty's Government and supporting them, to deprive any elector of Ireland of his franchise under the peculiar circumstances of the case. He was sorry he heard no response from the other side to that; and he could only say he should heartily join with his hon. Friend the Member for Cavan in endeavouring to report Progress.

MR. SULLIVAN said, it would greatly facilitate the passage of the Bill, if the Chief Secretary took an earlier occasion to make a definite statement upon this particular clause.

MR. J. LOWTHER said, he was quite prepared to discuss each clause when it was called from the Chair.

MR. R. POWER remarked that, unless he got an assurance from the Government that there was no intention to disfranchise any person because he received relief, he should throw every possible obstacle in the way of the passage of the Bill.

MAJOR O'GORMAN said, he could tell the Government that they would have to report Progress many, many times, if they adopted such a policy.

MAJOR NOLAN observed, that the whole of his constituents in Galway were largely affected by this clause; and he and his Friends, if the opposition to it were persisted in, would have to consider the Bill as a whole, and see whether it was worth having. The Irish Party would have to consider, in fact, whether it was worth anything whatever, and whether it would not be better for them to reject it altogether, and to throw themselves on the charity of America and Australia.

MR. O'CONNOR POWER fully endorsed the sentiments of his hon. Friends in reference to the serious character of this proposition. His proposal was was not to go, but to stop and discuss it. However, the Government were engaged in obstructing Obstruction—so let them report Progress and have done with it.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again *To-morrow.*

ANCIENT MONUMENTS BILL—[BILL 51.]

(*Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Beresford Hope, Mr. Morgan, Sir Richard Wallace.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[*Progress, Clause* 4, 16*th February.*]

Clause 4 (Notice to be given to Commissioners of intended injury to a monument to which this Act has been applied).

MR. MACARTNEY moved, in page 3, line 7, to leave out all the words after the word "any" to the end of the Clause, and to insert these words—

"Of the persons specified in sub-sections 1 and 2, section 3, Clause 3, to make any alteration in said monument, without giving notice in writing to the Commissioners, which notice shall set out the nature of the intended alteration at least three months before beginning such alteration. If the Commissioners shall object to the intended alteration, they shall serve notice of their objection upon the person or persons specified as above who propose to make such alteration; and if, notwithstanding the service of such notice on the part of the Commissioners, such person or persons shall persevere in their intention of making such alteration in said monument, they shall serve notice in writing to that effect upon the Commissioners at least two months before beginning such alteration; whereupon the Commissioners may apply to the Court for an injunction restraining such person or persons from making such alteration, and the Court, after hearing the case, may grant or refuse such injunction upon such terms as to costs, or otherwise, as may be just."

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK said, that he preferred the words as they stood in the Bill. He understood, however, that the Amendment met the views of many hon. Gentlemen opposite; and, therefore, as it was desirable to pass the Bill through, if possible, with general consent, he had accepted the alteration.

Amendment *agreed to.*

Remaining clauses and Schedules *agreed to,* without amendment.

House *resumed.*

Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

GLEBE LOAN (IRELAND) AMENDMENT ACT (1878) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. ERRINGTON, Bill to amend "The Glebe Loan (Ireland) Amendment Act, 1878," *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. ERRINGTON, Mr. O'CONOR, and Mr. DEASE.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 81.]

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE BILL.

On Motion of Mr. ELLIOT, Bill to amend the Laws relating to the Representation of the People in England and Wales, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. ELLIOT, Mr. HUNTER RODWELL, and Mr. Serjeant SPINKS.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 82.]

MEDICAL ACT (1858) AMENDMENT (NO. 3) BILL.

Ordered, That the Select Committee on Medical Act (1858) Amendment (No. 3) Bill do consist of Seventeen Members:—Mr. WILLIAM EDWARD FORSTER, Dr. CAMERON, Mr. DALRYMPLE, Mr. ERRINGTON, Mr. GOLDNEY, Mr. HEYGATE, Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, Sir TREVOR LAWRENCE, Dr. LUSH, Mr. MITCHELL HENRY, Mr. ARTHUR MILLS, Dr. LYON PLAYFAIR, Mr. Serjeant SIMON, Mr. DAVID PLUNKET, Mr. WHEELHOUSE, Mr. JOHN MAITLAND, and Mr. LOWE:—Power to send for persons, papers, and records; Five to be the quorum.—(*Lord George Hamilton.*)

KITCHEN AND REFRESHMENT ROOMS (HOUSE OF COMMONS).

Ordered, That a Standing Committee be appointed to control the arrangements of the Kitchen and Refreshment Rooms, in the department of the Serjeant at Arms attending this House:—Mr. ADAM, Mr. DICK, Sir WILLIAM DYKE, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. GOLDNEY, Sir ARTHUR HAYTER, Lord KENSINGTON, Mr. MUNTZ, Mr. RICHARD POWER, Mr. SHEIL, Sir HENRY WOLFF, Lord HENRY THYNNE, and Mr. MONK:—Five to be the quorum.—(*Mr. Adam.*)

GENERAL POLICE AND IMPROVEMENT (SCOTLAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (BROUGHTY FERRY) BILL.

On Motion of The LORD ADVOCATE, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order under "The General Police and Improvement (Scotland) Act, 1862," relating to the Burgh of Broughty Ferry, *ordered* to be brought in by The LORD ADVOCATE and Mr. Secretary CROSS.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 83.]

House adjourned at half after Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 20*th February*, 1880.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILL — *Second Reading*— Seeds (Ireland) * (10).

AFGHANISTAN—THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT.

ADDRESS FOR PAPERS.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL, on rising to call the attention of the House to the consequences which have resulted from the Policy of Her Majesty's Government towards the kingdom of Afghanistan, and to move for Papers; and to move an Address for Copy of any Correspondence found at Cabul between the late Ameer Shere Ali Khan and the Russian Authorities in Turkestan or St. Petersburgh, said: My Lords, it may, perhaps, be in the recollection of the House that when, nine months ago, I brought under the consideration of your Lordships the subject of foreign policy, the noble Earl at the head of the Government refused absolutely to enter upon any part of the Afghan Question. At the time, I must confess, I thought the refusal of the noble Earl was founded upon reasons which were rather formal than substantial; but I am bound to say that now I think the noble Earl was right. It is an immense advantage—an unspeakable advantage—in discussing so large a subject as that of the Afghan policy of the Government, that we should be able to discuss it with some knowledge of its absolute results. We had no such knowledge then. We have something of that knowledge now. I hope, my Lords, I am not drawing too large a draught on the candour of noble Lords opposite, if I ask them, in the first place, to confess, not at all as a matter of opinion, but as a matter of fact, that every evil and every danger that have ever been predicted by the opponents of that policy have actually happened. My Lords, we all know who it is that in recent years has spoken, in words which have been very often quoted, of "that fierce light which beats upon a Throne." I ask you, my Lords, whether there ever was in this world so fierce a light as that which beats upon this Afghan policy of Her Majesty's Government—upon that empty Throne, upon that ruined Kingdom, upon your own murdered Ambassador, upon those desolated valleys, upon those flaming villages, upon the whole country, given up to tribal war, to a mutinous soldiery, to anarchy and bloodshed? And then, my Lords, look at the future policy of the Government. Some Questions were put to the Government on the first night of the Session by my noble Friend behind me (Earl Granville), and I am sure I need not ask the House to remember—we must all have a painful recollection of—the hesitating answers that were given to those Questions. It was the desire of the Government—and I believe it is now the sincere desire of the Government—to get out of this policy as cheaply as they can; but both the noble Earl at the head of the Government and the noble Viscount at the head of the India Office (Viscount Cranbrook) were obliged to intimate the grave, perhaps insuperable, difficulties of returning even to the settlement of Afghanistan. The noble Viscount at the head of the India Office told us he was not responsible, and I have no doubt that what he said was perfectly true, for the article which recently appeared was written by Sir Henry Rawlinson; but I think your Lordships will be of opinion that it is a very able article, written by a very distinguished man, possessing immense knowledge of the country, and an ardent and earnest supporter of the policy of Her Majesty's Government; and I entreat those who wish to see what are the embarrassing results of the policy which has been pursued to look at the alternatives put before you by Sir Henry Rawlinson. I do not mean to say that those results are conclusive against the policy of Her Majesty's Government. You have a reply; and I am bound to say that if that reply could be sustained in argument it would be a good one. What I understand you to say is this—that you have been driven into this policy, not by you own will, but by three things mainly. First, by the danger of the advances of Russia in the East; secondly, by the danger which has arisen from the hostility of the late Ameer; and, thirdly, by certain errors which, as you say, were committed by your Predecessors in Office. I think that if those pleas could be sustained they would be a sufficient answer on the part of the Government. I am here, my Lords, to-night—before

I touch upon the present or future, which I hope to do before I sit down—to lay before your Lordships the grounds on which I am prepared to maintain that none of those pleas are good; that there was no danger from Russia, except that which you provoked; that there was no hostility on the part of the Ameer, except the hostility into which you drove him by your violence and injustice; and, lastly, that as regards the alleged errors of your Predecessors in Office, those errors are founded simply upon a broad and palpable, though, I doubt not, an unintentional, mis-statement. We got into this quarrel with Afghanistan in the first place—I do not mean to say that it was the immediate cause of the war—but we got into our quarrel with the Ameer on account of our demand from him of the acceptance of a British Resident in the City of Cabul. Now, I am sure your Lordships will all agree that good faith comes before policy, or rather, I ought to say, that good faith is a part of policy. There can be no good, sound policy anywhere, and especially in dealing with the Native Princes of the East, without the most absolute good faith. I am here, in the first place, to contend that your conduct in endeavouring to force British officers as Residents upon the Ameer was in violation of Treaty and of the solemn promises of former Viceroys. That is a point on which the Government and the supporters of the Government have taken great pains to mystify the people. Not in one document written by the Government, not in one speech uttered by the Government, has a fair and adequate account been given of our Treaties with Afghanistan. It is a very simple matter, and I will not occupy the time of the House by stating the facts at any length. We had only two Treaties with Afghanistan; one made in 1855, the other two years later—in 1857. The first of those Treaties is remarkable on this account—that it was extremely onerous on Afghanistan, and extremely light for us. It bound the Ameer to be "the friend of our friends and the enemy of our enemies;" whereas we undertook no corresponding obligation towards him, and we promised him nothing except this—that we should never interfere in his affairs. It was perfectly well known by everyone at the time what was meant by the Treaty. What was meant by it was that we should clear out of the country—to use a familiar expression—"bag and baggage," and have no British officer in Afghanistan. That was the well-known meaning at the time; but there was no definition of the Treaty.

I now come to the Treaty which was entered into two years afterwards, and that is the Treaty to which I wish to direct the special attention of your Lordships. That Treaty arose from a temporary occasion, and it is a common confusion of thought to say that a Treaty which arises out of a purely temporary occasion is necessarily in itself temporary. I need not point out to your Lordships the fallacy of that argument. Very trivial circumstances may give rise to a new arrangement, and that new arrangement may contain clauses of permanent obligation. So it was in this case. What happened was this: A war arose in which the Persian Government seized the City of Herat, which at that time was considered to be against the interests of this country, and we determined upon active measures against Persia. For this purpose a considerable sum of money was given to the Ameer of Cabul to enable him to recover Herat, and also to resist any further aggression on the part of the Government of Persia, which was at the time supposed to be, more or less, in secret alliance with Russia. This subsidy was sent to the then Ameer, Dost Mahomed, and it was agreed with him that British officers should go into Afghanistan with the single and sole object of seeing that that subsidy was devoted to the purposes for which it was intended. The utmost jealousy was evinced by Dost Mahomed; and to please and satisfy him the English Government drew up a most stringent clause, forbidding the British officers taking the smallest concern in anything but the outlay of the money advanced by the British Government. That clause—Clause 7—which related to the subsidy said—"Whenever the subsidy shall cease the British officers shall be withdrawn"—not from Cabul, but "from the Ameer's country"—from the whole country. Now, if the 7th clause had stopped there, it would have been enough. I need not say that, as a mere matter of verbal quibble, if British officers had gone away the next day it would have been no violation of the Treaty; but the matter is made quite clear by the subsequent words—

> "Whenever the subsidy shall cease the British Officers shall be withdrawn from the Amir's country; but at the pleasure of the British Government a vakeel, not a European officer, shall remain at Cabul on the part of the Government, and one at Peshawur on the part of the Government of Cabul."

Now, that was a distinct clause, providing for the future relations between the two Governments, and it was a solemn promise on the part of the British Government, that if the Government required an Agent in Cabul, the Agent should be a native of India, and not a British officer; and I need not say that that was a permanent obligation.

I come now to a matter in which I have taken a considerable share, and that is the promises given by Lord Mayo in 1869. As your Lordships will recollect, Lord Mayo went out to India just as the Government with which I was connected came into power. He was appointed by the previous Government—that is, by the noble Lords opposite, forming a different Cabinet from the present—almost at the moment I received the Seals of Office. I had no opportunity of seeing Lord Mayo before he left England. I had not the advantage of his friendship, or even of his acquaintance, and I had no opportunity of giving him any verbal instructions on the subject; and the truth is, I should not have given him any instructions with regard to his conduct in dealing with the Ameer. People forget now, after the controversy of the past two years, that at that time there was no difference of opinion whatever between the two sides as to our policy in Afghanistan. If I wished to instruct him about Shere Ali, I would have copied word for word a despatch written by Sir Stafford Northcote a few months before I took the Seals of the India Office. Soon after Lord Mayo arrived in India Shere Ali requested an interview, and it was arranged that a great interview should take place at Umballa. Now, it is important to consider, first of all, what were the demands of Shere Ali, and what were the promises of Lord Mayo. A very important part of one charge which I shall have to make against Her Majesty's Government is founded on the nature of the demands which Shere Ali made in 1869. Lord Mayo thus writes—

> "The object of the Ameer in coming to Umballa was to supplement if possible the Treaty of 1857 (which he termed one-sided), because he wished us to declare that we would be 'the friend of his friends' and the 'enemy of his enemies,' that we would not acknowledge 'any friend in the whole of Afghanistan save the Ameer and his descendants.' He desired and asked that the British Government should not be the sole judge of when and how future assistance was to be given."—[*Afghanistan*, No. 1, p. 93.]

Lord Mayo goes on to say that "compliance with these desires was impossible." The essence of them is that our guarantee shall be unlimited both as regards his domestic and foreign affairs. What Lord Mayo promised, however, was this—

> "The British Government will view with severe displeasure any attempts on the part of your rivals to disturb your position as Ruler of Cabul and re-kindle civil war, and it will further endeavour, from time to time, by such means as circumstances may require, to strengthen the Government of your Highness, to enable you to exercise with equity and with justice your rightful rule, and to transmit to your descendants all the dignities and honours of which you are the lawful possessor."—[*Ibid.* p. 90-91.]

When this despatch reached the Government at home, we feared there might be some misunderstanding, and I, therefore, wrote back to guard against possible ambiguity, telling Lord Mayo when occasion arose to make the Ameer clearly understand that we should retain in our own hands the power of judging in each case. This drew from Lord Mayo a long despatch, in which he vindicated and explained the whole circumstances, and to that despatch I replied that the Government were completely satisfied by his explanation. It has been said in various ways, and circulated in private conversation, that Lord Mayo was prevented by me from giving the Ameer as much as he desired to give. There is not a shadow of foundation for them. You will find in the public despatch of Lord Mayo he accepted the principles laid down, and he said there was no difference whatever in principle between his views and those of Her Majesty's Government, and that he should act upon them in the future as he had already done in the past. So far as that goes, there was complete agreement; and I cannot help looking back with infinite pleasure on the fact that during the time Lord Mayo was in India up to his most calamitous death there never was any difference of opinion of the smallest moment, and Lord Mayo acted entirely on principles of which the Government entirely approved. But this was not the only promise given by Lord Mayo to Shere Ali. He also gave some other promises by word of mouth, and you will find these in the despatch of, I think, May, 1869. These were the words—that no European officers should be placed in his cities as Residents; that there should be no European troops, no fixed subsidy, and no dynastic pledges. These were summed up in private letters addressed to me; and among these I find, in one dated June, 1869, Lord Mayo said the only pledges to the Ameer were that we should not interfere in his affairs, that we should support his independence, that we should not force European officers or Residents upon him against his will. I think I have made it plain what was the state of the case at the time of Lord Mayo. I know what is said on this subject. We are told that Lord Mayo was before the deluge, and that Russia has made great advances since his time. The ingenuity of the Government is very great; and, under the influence of Russophobia, it tramples not only over the facts of history, but the facts of geography. I shall quote a few sentences in which it is endeavoured to be made out that this extraordinary Russian advance took place between the time of Lord Mayo and the time of my noble Friend behind me (the Earl of Northbrook.) In the celebrated despatch of November 19, it is said that the advance of Russia in Central Asia had not up to this period assumed dimensions such as to cause uneasiness to the Indian Government. Russia, it was further said, had advanced her outposts, reducing the distance of 1,000 miles to 400 miles in this time. Now, what I represent to the House is, that there is hardly any truth in this description. The great advances Russia made in Central Asia were all made in the five years between 1864 and 1869. Russia had made the march from the Jaxartes to the Oxus; she had advanced over that immense space. She had planted her standards in the capital of Bokhara, and the whole of Bokhara—not only 400 miles from Cabul, but adjoining it—had been subjected to the Russian power. She had then possession of Samarcand, and erected that great Principality of Turkestan and placed it in the hands of General Kauffman; and so utterly untrue is it as an historical fact that there was any opinion in favour of Russian aggression that, at the very moment Lord Mayo went to meet Shere Ali at Umballa, Russia was claiming no inconsiderable portion of the territories of the Ameer. She was claiming Badaskhan, lying immediately at the back of the Hindu Kush. There is no truth whatever in the broad distinction sought to be drawn between the time of my noble Friend and the time of Lord Mayo.

I now come to the transactions of 1873, in which I had considerable responsibility. Nothing is so flagrant as the account which has been given of them. I will show, first, what were the real facts, and then what has been made of them. Early in 1873 two very important events occurred. A long negotiation, conducted by my noble Friend behind me (the Earl of Northbrook), in conjunction with the India Office, with the object of securing the territories of the Ameer from Russian domination, had come to a satisfactory conclusion. A disputed question respecting the boundaries of Afghanistan was also settled by the arbitration which was begun in the time of Lord Mayo, known as the Seistan Arbitration. The Viceroy thought it desirable that all these matters should be communicated to the Ameer by a British officer deputed for the purpose; and my noble Friend sent a message to the Ameer proposing to send a British officer to Cabul. Actuated by that ingrained suspicion which we could not get out of the minds of the Afghans, the Ameer thought there would be danger in receiving such an officer, and his reply was—"Thank you, I am much obliged, but I would prefer sending my own officer to meet you at Simla." My noble Friend, mindful of his Treaty obligations, and of the solemn promises of his Predecessor, did not send a British officer to Cabul, and the Ameer was allowed to send his own officer to Simla, where the interviews took place in the months of June and July, 1873. On the 1st of July, in consequence of a communication from my noble Friend, I sent this telegram—

"Great caution is necessary in assuring Ameer of material assistance which may raise undue

> and unfounded expectations. He already shows symptoms of claiming more than we may wish to give."—[*Ibid.* p. 108.]

When I sent that telegram, I had on my mind the demands which the Ameer had previously made upon Lord Mayo. In the course of a very few days my noble Friend found that Shere Ali was really making the same demands he had made upon Lord Mayo in 1869. In a despatch, dated the 30th of July, my noble Friend behind me said—

> "Two points in connection with the promised assurance were then brought forward by the Envoy. He requested, in the first place, that, in the event of any aggression on the Ameer's territories, the British Government would distinctly state that they would consider such aggressor as an enemy."—[*Ibid.* p. 114.]

It is, observe, an unconditional guarantee, exactly what the Ameer asked from Lord Mayo. The next document is of the same order; it shows distinctly what the Ameer wanted—

> "The Envoy asked that a written assurance might be given to him to the effect that if Russia or any State of Turkestan or elsewhere under Russian influence should commit an aggression on the Ameer's territory, or should otherwise annoy the Ameer, the British Government would consider such aggressor as an enemy, and that they would promise to afford to the Ameer promptly such assistance in money and in arms as might be required until the danger should be passed or the invasion repelled. Also that, if the Ameer should be unable to cope single-handed with the invader, the British Government should promptly despatch a force to his assistance by whatever route the Ameer might require the same, the said force to be employed against the invader and to return to British territory when the invasion was repelled. No return for the assistance above-mentioned to be required by the British Government from Afghanistan."

So here you have the full expectation of the Ameer. Not only were we to give him an unconditional guarantee against all foreign aggression, but we were to make a promise that our troops were to march through his territory by what route he chose, and to march out again the moment they had accomplished his purpose. That was a request it was quite impossible to grant. It was not the only one he made. We have also evidence that he wanted to speak about an unconditional guarantee for the succession of his adopted heir, Abdullah Jan. He had nothing whatever to offer to the British Government in return for these unreasonable requests. My noble Friend wished to re-open the question of British Residents in a general and friendly manner, in a manner unaccompanied with threats and violence, and that would have been consistent with the Treaty; it would not have been as inconsistent as doing it in a violent manner, and accompanied with threats. It was not in the least inconsistent to ask—"Will you re-consider this matter?" But the Envoy distinctly told my noble Friend—"I have no power to treat with you on that matter, none whatever;" and there was nothing for it but to leave it out of the negotiations. I wish now to read a second telegram I sent to my noble Friend with reference to a communication he proposed to make to the Ameer—

> "Cabinet thinks you should inform Ameer that we do not at all share his alarm, and consider there is no cause for it; but you may assure him we shall maintain our settled policy in favour of Afghanistan, if he abides by our advice in external affairs."—[*Ibid.* p. 108.]

In consequence of that telegram, my noble Friend gave the following assurance to the Ameer:—

> "It would be the duty of the Ameer to refer the question [of foreign invasion] to the British Government, who would endeavour, &c. In such event, should these endeavours prove fruitless, the British Government are prepared to assure the Ameer that they will afford him assistance in the shape of arms and money, and will also, in case of necessity, aid him with troops."

That was the promise given by my noble Friend behind me; it was a promise distinctly in advance of that given by Lord Mayo; it was more clearly worded, and more definite. It is commonly said by the supporters of the Government that we gave him no promise at all. I wish to direct attention to a remarkable document—a telegram from the present Viceroy, at the time the Treaty of Gandamak was under consideration, and one very much like a telegram to me from my noble Friend behind me. On the 7th of April, 1879, the Viceroy telegraphed—

> "If in return for 4th article, which places his foreign relations in our hands, Yakoob Khan asks protection from foreign invasion. A distinct answer will be required."—[*Afghan Papers*, No. 7, 1879.]

And on the 13th of April the Secretary of State telegraphed to the Viceroy—

> "If Yakoob faithfully conducts his foreign policy under our direction, we shall be prepared to support him against any foreign aggression

which may result from such conduct with money, arms, and troops, to be employed at our discretion, when and where we think fit."—[*Ibid.*]

This is the answer of the present Government—not one step in advance of the promise I made before. The truth is, the promise given by the present Government was more conditional, more carefully guarded, and left more loopholes for escape—a great deal more so than the promise made by me. And yet there is no Member of the Government—there is no supporter of the Government now making electioneering speeches—who does not say that we refused the Ameer any promise whatever. [Viscount CRANBROOK: Hear, hear!] The noble Viscount seems to approve that declaration. I lay before the House the facts. Lord Northbrook did give a promise to the Ameer, which in substance was, word for word, the promise we gave in 1873, only it is more wrapt up in verbiage, and left more loopholes for escape. One word with respect to my telegram, of which much has been made, stating that we did not share the Ameer's alarm. I am constantly taunted with having committed a great error in saying that I did not share the Ameer's alarm. I avow, in the presence of this House, that I did not share, and I do not share, the Ameer's alarm. It appears to me to be an undignified policy on the part of England to be perpetually screaming about these advances of Russia. I am not, and I was not, alarmed by these advances; and I should like to know how it was consistent with the communications we had just made to the Ameer that Russia had acknowledged that his territory extended to the Oxus, to tell him at the same time that we were in the greatest possible alarm because Russia had taken Khiva? I wish to direct attention for a moment to the narrative of these transactions which has been given by the noble Viscount opposite (Viscount Cranbrook). I wish to make myself quite clear. I have absolute confidence in the intentional fairness of the noble Viscount; I believe him utterly incapable of misrepresenting consciously anything done by his Predecessor in Office; but I have to state to the House that gross misrepresentation was made in these despatches. It was a very unusual thing for a Government, before it produced Papers at all, to publish a comment giving a version of the transactions of its Predecessors intended to prejudge them and to prejudice the public mind. I have not known such a thing done before. It is usual to present Papers to Parliament, and to leave Parliament to form its own judgment. In this case, 10 days or a fortnight before Parliament met, a despatch was produced containing this passage—

> "The capture of Khiva by the forces of the Czar in the spring of 1873, and the total subordination of that Khanate to Russia, caused Shere Ali considerable alarm, and led him to question the value of the pledges with reference to Afghanistan which had been given by His Imperial Majesty to England, and which had been communicated to His Highness by the British Government. Actuated by his fears on this score, the Ameer sent a special Envoy to Simla in the summer of that year, charged with the duty of expressing them to the Government of India. Finding that the object of the Ameer was to ascertain definitely how far he might rely on the help of the British Government if his territories were threatened by Russia, Lord Northbrook's Government was prepared to assure him that, under certain conditions, the Government of India would assist him to repel unprovoked aggression. But Her Majesty's Government at home did not share His Highness's alarm, and the Viceroy ultimately informed the Ameer that the discussion of the question would be best postponed to a more convenient season."

Now, my Lords, if the object of a narrative is to give to persons ignorant of the facts a true impression of them, I say that no man reading that paragraph would have the slightest notion of the facts. It professes to give the object of Shere Ali's mission to the Viceroy. He could not have sent this mission because he was frightened about Khiva, because this was a month before Khiva was taken, and at the moment when General Kauffmann's column was at death's door for the want of water. This Memorandum passes over in silence—apparently intentional silence—all the extravagent demands made by Shere Ali. It professes to give an account of the action of the Home Government; and here it condescends to quote one half of the telegram and suppress the other—a transaction which I have never known before in any public document issued under the authority of the Secretary of State. Lastly, it professes to give an account of the action of the Viceroy; and in this account it omits every fact and statement as to the promise which my noble Friend (the Earl of Northbrook) had given to the Ameer, and which turned out to be exactly the promises which Her Majesty's Government were now willing to grant. I must say such a document stands alone in the history of these proceedings. I do not attribute it to the noble Viscount opposite. In the first place, I know very well that, in the ordinary way of transacting the business of the India Office, a despatch of that nature would not be drafted by the Secretary of State; but he was in the hands of a clique of Russophobists, and he had not the previous knowledge to enable him to correct the facts. My belief is still the noble Viscount was ignorant of the facts; and every one of your lieutenants only makes the matter worse by ignorance of the facts. The other day a speech was made by a Member of the Government, no less than the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Of the honour of Mr. Bourke I have no doubt—no more than of my own; but what did he say at King's Lynn? He stated broadly that nothing whatever in the nature of a promise had been made to Shere Ali; and only the other day at Liverpool Viscount Sandon, a Member of the Cabinet, stated broadly that nothing of the kind had ever been given to Shere Ali. All this was the result of that misleading despatch of the noble Viscount. Now, my Lords, I have done with all the transactions in connection with which I have any personal responsibility, and I now come to the transactions of the present Government. After 1873, I have no doubt it is perfectly true that the Ameer was more or less in a sulky and discontented state. He was affected, not so much by the refusal of these extravagant requests, but he was deeply mortified by the result of the Seistan Arbitration. There were other circumstances that made him sulky and dissatisfied. He refused to accept money offered by my noble Friend; and various speculations had been made as to the cause of that refusal. In my own mind, my Lords, there can be no doubt as to the cause. As I have already mentioned to the House, my noble Friend had spoken as directed by the Home Government about re-considering the arrangement, and we may well suppose that the refusal to take money arose from an apprehension that it might revive the notion of sending British officers to Cabul. If he took the money it might involve him in new negotiations. However that might be, I admit the fact that the Ameer was sulky; and what did the Government do? I was extremely amused by a passage in the speech to which I have referred, which I need not recall to your Lordships, in which it was stated that so much had been done to make amends to this unfortunate Ameer, who had been insulted by the previous Government. The most earnest and sincere endeavours, it was said, had been made to conciliate the Ameer, and had failed. How had the present Government tried to conciliate the Ameer? I will tell you what the Government did. In the first place, they were very nearly a year in Office before they did anything. They came into Office in 1874, and they took no notice of Cabul, or anything connected with it, for a whole year. At last, on the 22nd of January, 1875, they made their first move. Heaven knows why they made it; I do not know, except that they were button-holed by Sir Bartle Frere. What was the first move of the Government to conciliate the Ameer, and make him more friendly than he had been? They issued an order to my noble Friend that he was immediately to send a British Mission to Cabul—a thing the Ameer had, of all others, rejected with horror; and—could it be believed?—they gave this order to the Viceroy without offering a single halfpenny of return to the Ameer. I grant that the despatch of the Government was most temperately worded. Nothing could run more smoothly than the instructions to the Viceroy. There was not one single word about Treaties, promises, or engagements of any kind. It must have been written by one absolutely ignorant of the whole previous history. I can only say that the instruction of the Government seems to me to have been a case of the most astounding rashness and ignorance on the part of the Government. That instruction was given in a Correspondence which lasted altogether 16 months. To whom was the blame attributable? A great part of it was due to the Government at home; and if the whole of it was due to my noble Friend, I suppose no Member of this House who sits opposite would venture to suggest that the Viceroy is in that condition that he is to receive, without a single remonstrance or explanation of his own views, such an order from the Secretary of State. My noble Friend knew perfectly well that he was bound by Treaties and obligations to the Ameer, and that the traditional policy of the Indian Government for 40 years was absolutely opposed to the step which he was directed to take. He accordingly addressed a remonstrance to the Home Government on the 4th of June, which they took four months to answer. And what was the Government answer? They persisted in their instructions; and here again they offered nothing to the Ameer, but they advised the Indian Government to begin the negotiations with what they themselves called ostensible pretexts—that is to say, to begin the transactions by swerving from the straightforwardness which we had hitherto shown to the Ameer. What was the answer of my noble Friend? He intimated distinctly that he would not be a party to any such transaction, and in his despatch my noble Friend says—

> "The result of our deliberations is that we are convinced that if a Mission is sent to Cabul the most advisable course would be to state frankly and fully to the Ameer the real purpose of it."

Now, I ask, is there one Member of this House who does not respond to that opinion of my noble Friend? Promises were made to the Ameer that his territory should remain safe against external attack. Why, that is going back from previous promises; it is a great deal less than Lord Mayo promised, and a great deal less than I promised. That is your conciliatory policy.

And now I come to a further transaction, which I am the more ready to do on account of a cheer lately given by the noble Viscount. Lord Lytton himself says—

> "There is in the Treaty of December nothing whatever to preclude the British Government from pointing out to the Ameer at any time the propriety of receiving a British officer as permanent Resident at Cabul in any fair or friendly manner."

I entirely agree with that; but I have already shown that you did not do this fairly, because you began with ostensible pretexts, which the Ameer was sharp enough to see through at once. And, more than that, having begun in a manner not fair, you proceeded, in the second place, in a manner not friendly, but accompanied by the most violent threats. That is denied by the friends of the Government in their speeches all over the country; but I will proceed to prove that it is so. On the 8th of July Lord Lytton wrote to the Ameer—

> "It will for this reason cause the Viceroy sincere regret if your Highness, by hastily rejecting the hand of friendship now frankly held out to you, should render nugatory the friendly intentions of his Excellency, and oblige him to regard Afghanistan as a State which has voluntarily isolated itself from the alliance and support of the British Government."

Thus, in the face of a solemn Treaty, and also in face of repeated promises of one of the noblest of your Viceroys, you break faith with this unfortunate Prince. You tell him that unless he agrees to accept your Envoy, whom you promised not to send, you would cast him adrift and break all your Treaties with him. Is that what you call acting in a fair and friendly manner? But that is not all. In another Paper which passed from Lord Lytton in the course of these negotiations I read—

> "But unless the Ameer agrees to the arrangement indicated in paragraph 4 of this Note, and cordially enters into it, it will not be practically in my power to undertake any obligation on his behalf, or to do anything for his assistance, whatever may be the dangers or difficulties of his future position."

Here you have repeated that we shall cast him off. But here is a third repetition of the same thing. Lord Lytton says—

> "But the moment we cease to regard Afghanistan as a friendly and firmly allied State, what is there to prevent us from providing for the security of our own Frontier by an understanding with Russia, which might have the effect of wiping Afghanistan out of the map altogether? If the Ameer does not desire to come to a speedy understanding with us, Russia does, and she desires it at his expense."

Now, that is a most extraordinary passage, coming from the Viceroy. For what does it mean? That if the Ameer does not come to a speedy understanding with us we shall come to an understanding with Russia, and we shall do it at his expense. Here, my Lords, is a threat not only of our anger, but almost that we are prepared to hand him over to Russia. Now, I must ask the Government, in their answer to me to-night, to tell me, if they can, what authority the Viceroy had for making that statement? The Viceroy has told us in a published despatch that he went out to India after personal conference not only with Her Majesty's Government, but with the Russian Ambassador. A most extraordinary statement that for a Viceroy to make. What had he to do with the Russian Ambassador? Was it by the Russian Ambassador he was told that Russia would agree to wipe Afghanistan off the map? Am I to assume that there was some understanding between Russia and us in certain circumstances to divide Afghanistan? But what I want to point out is that those words had the effect of showing the Ameer that he had nothing to expect unless he yielded to us, and that he was under some danger from Russia unless he should make up his mind to do what we asked him. Therefore, I say that our demands on the Ameer to receive a British officer were not made in a fair or a friendly manner, but with the most violent threats and in a manner which was a breach of the Treaty. And we continued to speak in the same tone and with the same threats. The principle laid down by the Government was this—that we were to ask the Ameer to do certain things, and, when he had done so, to bid him open his mouth wider and see what good things would come to him. The great object of the Government was, in the first place, to draw up certain offers to the Ameer which would not give him what he wanted; and in not giving him what he wanted, I must say the Government were perfectly right. No Government would give the Ameer what he wanted. We were perfectly right not to give him an unconditional guarantee. But the second object of the Government was not so right, and that was to persuade the Ameer that we were giving him what he wanted. I am making a serious charge against the Government. I wish to say nothing outside the House which I am not ready to say inside it. And now I wish to lay before the House the ostensible proofs that, as you began, so you continued these deplorable transactions. One of the demands of the Ameer was a dynastic guarantee for his son. Great care was taken by Her Majesty's Government that the promises given should fall short of anything that was in the least unconditional. They say—

> "Her Majesty's Government do not desire to renounce their traditional policy of abstention from all unnecessary interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. But the frank recognition of a *de facto* order in the succession established by a *de facto* Government to the throne of a foreign State does not, in their opinion, imply or necessitate any intervention in the internal affairs of that State."—[*Afghanistan*, No 1, 1878, p. 158.]

That is to say, you were willing to acknowledge him as a *de facto* Sovereign, and his son as a *de facto* heir. Perfectly right; but what follows was not so right. I want to show what Lord Lytton was prepared to tell the Ameer; but first let me say that Lord Mayo wrote to me in a published despatch that the Ameer had a special horror of those *de facto* guarantees. He said—

> "Had the Viceroy endeavoured to lay down in that letter an abstract principle with regard to the *de facto* rule, it would have been taken as little short of an insult."

With regard to dynastic guarantees, Lord Mayo said—

> "I authorize the Agent to tell the Ameer that, if His Highness wishes to make me his friend, I will be a warm and true, a fast and firm, friend to him, doing all that is practically in my power to stand by him in his difficulties, to cordially support him, to strengthen his throne, to establish his dynasty, and to confirm the succession in the person of his son, Sirdar Abdullah Jan." —[*Ibid.* p. 185.]

Now, my Lords, you will observe that these promises all distinctly proceed on the principle of not giving to the Ameer that which he asked. Now I come to the endeavours of Her Majesty's Government to make the Ameer believe that we were giving him all he asked. On the 11th of October, 1876, Lord Lytton addressed this letter to the Ameer—

> "Your Highness will thus be assured by the Agent that I shall be prepared to comply with the wishes which you announced through your Agent at Simla in 1873, and to which you have adhered in more recent communications." —[*Ibid.* p. 186.]

Here is another passage—

> "The conditions on which the Governor General in Council is now prepared to enter into closer and more definite relations with the Government of Afghanistan are in every particular the same as those desired by the Ameer himself on the occasion of his visit to Umballa in 1869, and again in more or less general terms so urged by him on the Government of India through his Minister Syud Noor Mahomed Shah in 1873."—[*Ibid.* p. 187.]

This is quite distinct. But I am sorry to say this was not all. Those were public documents sent to the Ameer through the usual and official channel. Lord Lytton, the Viceroy, had in his camp a gentleman who was a personal friend of the Ameer, Captain Grey, who was employed to write a letter to him to say that the Viceroy was prepared to give him everything that former Viceroys had given. He further says—

> "In the absence of a Treaty between the two States the Minister at home exercised discretion; but when a Treaty is made everyone will be bound by its terms."

My Lords, this is the first time that a distinction is set up between a Treaty obligation and a solemn promise of the Viceroy; and I maintain that if you are to rule India at all you must rule it on the principle that an Englishman's word is as good as his bond. But the Ameer was not deceived by these promises. He knew very well that they were insincere, and that he would not get what he wanted. I will not weary the House with all the subsequent negotiations, but will only read one extract, which is a sufficient comment on the transactions now before your Lordships. The Viceroy wrote a despatch to the Government summing up those transactions, and saying—

> "These concessions which have been sanctioned would not practically commit the Government more than the former renewal of the assurances already given by Lord Mayo in the year 1869."

Here you have the Government of India assuring the Ameer that it was prepared to give him everything that former Viceroys had offered, and then writing home that it had offered nothing. I will not trouble the House with a review of the miserable negotiations at Peshawur, though I could justify all I said of them nine months ago. I will only mention three things. First, the Ameer was told that he had misapprehended the demands of the British Government, and then was accused of evading those demands. Next, he was told that the British Government had no desire whatever to press British officers upon him; and, lastly, that it was desired to send those officers not to Cabul, but to other parts of the country. I ask the House what confidence could be placed in those assurances? The Conference was closed by the Viceroy's terminating it abruptly. He knew that a messenger was on his way from the Ameer, conceding everything that the British Government demanded; and in order to prevent the Envoy coming and placing him in an embarrassing position he telegraphed—"Close the Conference up," and, accordingly, the Conference was closed. I wonder what would be the effect on the Ameer of such conduct as this? I am told all over the country that it was my noble Friend and myself who alienated the Ameer and drove him into the arms of Russia. Will that stand after the transactions I have narrated to the House, and of which I have given an authentic proof? But I am happy to say I have a witness whose authority will not be controverted by the noble Lord opposite. I have the authority of the Viceroy himself. In his despatch, drawn up at the close of the Conferences on May 10, we have these ominous words—

> "Seeing no immediate prospect of further support from the British Government, and fearing, perhaps, his surmise correct, he would naturally become more urgent in his advances to Russia."

That is the confession of the Viceroy—that he had closed these negotiations in a manner which he knew would tend to throw the Ameer into the arms of Russia. But there is another passage in that despatch of May 10 which I will read to the House, and it is this—

> "The further course of Cabul politics we cannot foresee, and do not attempt to predict; but we await its natural development with increased confidence in the complete freedom and paramount strength of our own position."—[*Afghan Papers*, 1878, p. 172.]

That is, he awaited the natural development of a situation which he himself had confessed was a situation which would throw the Ameer into the arms of Russia. Was there ever so cynical a confession made by a Viceroy? Was there ever such a confession made by the head of the British Government—that he had contrived a state of things in which the Ameer would be thrown into the hands of Russia, and awaited with confidence the development of the situation? The British Government was in the position of men who, having set traps for some wild animal, retired into the jungle to watch for their prey. Now, that despatch, though dated May 10, 1877, was not produced and laid before Parliament for 18 months. Parliament was left in complete ignorance of the fact that you had withdrawn your Agent from the Ameer; that you had suspended diplomatic relations with him; and that you had done so under circumstances which, according to your own confession, would throw him into the arms of Russia. I ask, what is the use of putting into the mouth of the Sovereign on that Throne that she meets with gladness her Parliament, and will accept their advice, when you conceal from that Parliament all the facts that would enable them to give her their advice? But you say that the Eastern Question had then risen above the horizon. Do you believe that Russia did not know what was going on in Afghanistan? Russia knew you had quarrelled with the Ameer; and yet the knowledge which the Russian Government had you refused to Parliament and the people. Every attempt has been made since the war broke out to prove that your trap succeeded, and that the Ameer was thrown into the hands of Russia. What do you acknowledge yourselves? It was 14 months before there was any word of the Russian Mission; in fact, a complete separation in point of time between your negotiations and that Mission. What did the Secretary of State for India himself confess? He wrote in the month of October, 1877, to say that the Ameer was rather friendly in his manner, and the noble Marquess' (the Marquess of Salisbury's) advice was —"Let him alone, he will come right." I believe that was perfectly true. If you had treated him kindly, if you had sent back your Envoy to him, he would have come round. That is the confession on the part of the Government, that up to October, 1877, there were no indications of hostility on the part of the Ameer.

I now come to the last attempt made to prove that the unfortunate Ameer had been treating with Russia. I wish to move for copies of Papers which, it is alleged, have been found at Cabul. In referring to the following paragraph, I must inform those Members of the House who may not be aware of the fact that there is a well-known, though of course an indefinite, connection between the Government of India and *The Pioneer* newspaper. When the Government of India wish to make an announcement, they do it through the columns of *The Pioneer*. The other day this paragraph appeared—

> "*The Pioneer* now asserts that an immense mass of correspondence has been found and laid before the Government, including instructions from the Russian Government to its agents in Central Asia, pointing out the course they were to follow with Shere Ali. These papers are said to show that Russian intrigues against Afghanistan were active as far back as 1873, and to afford conclusive proof of the falsity of the excuse given by the Russian Mission to Cabul last year."

Your Lordships will find that this paragraph has been repeated in every paper in this country that is in the interest of the Government. It has likewise been practically repeated by Sir Henry Rawlinson in the article to which I have referred. I am bound to say that I receive this intimation with very great scepticism. In the first place, I cannot help remarking that this discovery has been made just in the nick of time before a General Election. Next, I observe that the paragraph refers to the year 1873. In the third place, I notice in the Papers just presented to Parliament a most extraordinary despatch from General Roberts. Surely, if there is a man in the world who is likely to have known something about this alleged Correspondence it is General Roberts. Well, General Roberts writes a despatch to the Viceroy, in which he gives his grounds for thinking that the Ameer was thrown into the hands of Russia since 1873; but he does not pretend that there are any Papers. He says that the unfortunate Prince, Yakoob Khan, after his abdication, when he was accused of being an accomplice in the murder of Major Cavagnari, and when he may be said to have had a rope round his neck, told him (General Roberts) that his father had been offended with the British Government since 1873. Your Lordships will judge of the value of a statement made by a man under such circumstances; and I have no doubt that they have no documentary evidence to show. At all events, I challenge the Government to produce this Correspondence. I myself am not wholly without information from India, and it is possible that my information may be as accurate as that of the Government. My information is to the effect that these documents do not in the least support the accusations against the Ameer, and I challenge the Government to produce them. It has been said that they cannot be produced because their production would give offence to Russia. But in these Blue Books several documents which must be most offensive to Russia have been published. I frankly say I shall not believe the account of these documents unless I see the documents themselves. It is quite possible that Russia may have been intriguing for a long time, and it is possible that the Ameer may have been in communication with Russia; but I wish to see the evidence, and I am the more confirmed in this wish by the way in which you use documents to which I am able to refer.

Next I pass to the accusation brought against the unfortunate Ameer, Shere Ali, whom you hunted to death, that for many years since 1873 he had been in active and treasonable correspondence with the Russian Government. No one has made this accusation in broader terms than the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. In his speech the other day he said that Shere Ali, thrown over by us in 1873, had opened a communication with General Kaufmann, and had ever since been in disloyal communication with the Russian Government. That speech of Mr. Bourke's made me determine to go through every one of the letters between the Ameer and General Kaufmann which have been going on for seven or eight years. It is universally stated on behalf of the Government that that Correspondence, which began in 1870, assumed a new character after the time of my noble Friend. The general result of my examination is this: Between the years 1870 and 1872—the year before the time of my noble Friend—there were in all six letters. The first of them, from General Kaufmann, occasioned great alarm to the Ameer; but Lord Mayo said to him—"Never mind; it is all nonsense; there is no cause of alarm. Do you answer him in civil terms, and no harm will be done whatever." The Ameer took Lord Mayo's counsel, and ever after that the Ameer showed General Kaufmann's letters to our Agent at Cabul, and also his own answers. Between the years 1873 and 1876, when my noble Friend came away, there were eight letters, which is exactly the same proportion as before. I find there is no change whatever in the tone of the Ameer. Not only is there no change for the worse after 1873, but between 1873 and 1876 two of General Kaufmann's letters occasioned to the Ameer the most violent suspicion. On one occasion General Kaufmann had said he wished for the prosperity and success of the country under the protection of His Imperial Majesty and the Queen of England. The Ameer took mortal offence at this letter, and coming to the Viceroy's Agent, he said—"What can General Kaufmann mean by saying that we are under the protection of Russia?" The Agent told him he did not see that stated in the letter, and accordingly the Ameer sent back a civil reply. This Correspondence contains another letter, which is a very awkward one for the Government to deal with. The last letter of that series was sent in February, 1877, and in that letter General Kaufmann used the expression about the country of Afghanistan being a neighbour of Russia. The Ameer took offence at this account, and asked—"Have we not Bokhara between Afghanistan and Russia?" He was extremely alarmed and jealous, and he did not answer that letter for five or six months. Look, my Lords, at the circumstance which happens. The account of these transactions at Cabul was forwarded to Peshawur on the 9th of September. Now, I have ascertained from the highest authority that the course of posts between Peshawur and Simla is four days. That account of the Ameer and his alarm in regard to Russia must have been in the hands of the Government of India before the 16th of September, the day on which Lord Lytton opened his new accusation against the Ameer of having intrigued with Russia through this Correspondence. My Lords, I confess that when I found out these dates I could not help hearing in my ear that solemn command which for 3,000 years has echoed from the altars of the Church—"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

I pass now to the actual results of your policy. A few months ago the Government were in high spirits, and thought their policy had turned out to be thoroughly successful. The noble Viscount the Secretary of State for India made a speech on the subject; but let me tell the noble Viscount this—that, granting the military success in overcoming the forces of Afghanistan, that was part of our case and not of his. We always said that the mere conquest of Afghanistan could be effected without serious difficulty, and we said that that made it all the more cowardly for you to attack Afghanistan except in case of absolute necessity. One of the dangers which we had always predicted—or, at least, which the Ameer had always predicted —was the danger to the life of our Envoy. That, however, was treated with the most supreme contempt. A few days before I left this country for America last year I had a long conversation with Lord Lawrence, and I said to him—"I have always thought this expression of fear as to the life of our Envoy is an ostensible pretext, like the pretext of the British Government." Lord Lawrence answered—"It is put forward to cover other objections; but, at the same time, depend upon it, there is real danger to the life of any Envoy sent to that country." You sent that unfortunate man, Sir Louis Cavagnari, with an inadequate escort—one of the sources of danger which we always foresaw and predicted. He had an escort of only 50 or 60 men, and the result was he was murdered in cold blood, with very little power of resistance. There is not a single Member of the Government who did not deplore deeply that unfortunate catastrophe; but this I must say—Sir Louis Cavagnari was the victim of the wilful and ignorant obstinacy of the policy of Her Majesty's Government. Up to three years ago the policy pursued with regard to Afghanistan was the policy, not of Lord Lawrence, but of England, for the previous 40 years. In supporting that policy, we held that, even if you got a Resident at Cabul, he would be useless to you. Read the Cabul diaries of Sir Louis Cavagnari, and you will see that he was virtually a prisoner. You see the atmosphere of suspicion in which he lived, and his utter ignorance of everything that was going on around him until his own fate was sealed. This terrible result you have produced by your determination to believe that a British officer would get you better information than a Mahometan, who was often allowed to be present at the Cabinet Councils of the Ameer. Look at the ignorance of General Roberts as to the condition of the country up to the 11th of December. Neither he nor you had any notion of the storm that was gathering; and yet on the 13th and 14th of that month General Roberts was within an inch of having his whole cantonments carried by the enemy. The object of the policy of Her Majesty's Government was to make of Cabul an independent Kingdom. Do you know the result of the destruction of the "Kingdom of Cabul?" One result would be to make your Empire conterminous with that of Russia. A distinguished Russian Professor at St. Petersburg says—"Let the two Empires be conterminous, and then England will be under recognisances to keep the peace with us." That is the Russian view of the matter, and that is the result of the policy of Her Majesty's Government. The whole of your policy has been founded upon the theory of what is called the "Caspian base of Russian operations," and not on the old base, the Samarcand base of operations, and there is before us an endless prospect of trouble and of war. Now, my Lords, those who support the policy of Her Majesty's Government are always reproaching us by saying—"You tell us the objections to our policy, but you never tell us your own." Well, it is not for me to advise Her Majesty's Government. I do not think the advice I might give would have any effect. I am not about to go into any details of policy. It would be in the highest degree presumptuous in me to do so. I do not know all the facts of this wonderful scrape into which you have got, and into which you have got your country. But I will say a few words, not as to the details of our policy, but as to the frame and temper of mind which is the basis of your policy. In the first place, I ask the Government to believe in the truth of what they say themselves. You, the Government, have told us that you have confidence in the permanent strength of our position in India. That was the language of the Viceroy before the war. Why, then, I ask, have you entered into this unnecessary war? Why, then, do you put your head down to the ground and fancy in alarm that you hear the tread of some tired and thirsty Russian columns? Why do you then lift up your heads, and say—"Good heavens! what are we to do? Here are the Russians advancing on Merv. Let us go on to Candahar, let us send British officers to Cabul, only let us do something," which, according to Lord Melbourne, means "let us do something foolish." I believe in the permanent strength of our position in India, and I will tell you why. We have there an Empire of 150,000,000 people—races which are faithful to us. We have a maritime position on each side. We can readily pour troops into India—such troops, that is to say, as we have to pour—and we have a railway system which is completed to the Frontier. Well, on the other hand, what is the character of Russia? What is the character of this Central Asian Empire of which you are so jealous and so much afraid? Theirs is a country essentially of a few scattered races, of a few mountain valleys, fertile more or less, separated by hundreds of miles of the most hideous deserts that exist in the world. Why, from the Oxus to Merv the distance is 170 miles, 150 miles of which is sand. Colonel Burnaby tells us, from authentic sources, of the amount of transport required by an Indian Army before it could move in that country. No Army, he says, could traverse that country with less than one baggage animal to two men. Think of the enormous difficulties in the way of an invasion of a country like that! Then there is this further consideration—namely, that we have really no right to a monopoly of Empire in the East. Russia has an Asiatic Empire older than our own. She is by nature an Asiatic Power. We are an Asiatic Power by accident. Russia has a legitimate field of operations in Central Asia. Within my own recollection we have annexed to our Indian Empire upwards of 30,000,000 people — probably six or seven times the entire population of Central Asia from the Caspian to the Wall of China. Russia, in all these places, has legitimate quarrels with the Khanates of Central Asia. What does Sir Henry Rawlinson say in the Blue Book before your Lordships? It will enable your Lordships to say whether it is reasonable to expect that Russia should stand the existence of a Power in Central Asia which renders commerce impossible, and why we should go cap in hand to the Emperor of Russia, and say—"Oh, do, for Heaven's sake, tell us you are not going to Merv." Why should he not go to Merv? Do you hold that the whole of Central Asia should be kept for your sake? What says Sir Henry Rawlinson—

> "If Merv is conquered by Russia, trade will prosper, man stealing will be suppressed, cultivation will be increased, and the condition of the people will be improved."

That is to be the dreadful effect of Russia's conquest of Merv, according to the prediction of the great prophet of Russophobia. What, my Lords, happened the other day? You were told we had got an assurance from the Emperor of Russia that he was not going to Merv; and the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs came down and, in a transport of delight, announced the intelligence to the House of Commons. The Emperor, when he heard of this, sent for our Ambassador and said to him—"What I stated was, not that I would not go to Merv, but that I did not intend to go there just now." And then the British Government goes to the Government of Russia and says—"Oh, we hope you are not going to retract what you said." That is a most undignified attitude for the British Government to assume. Well, but we are asked—"What is our policy?" I say it is to revert, as far as your blunders will permit, to the policy pursued 40 years ago. I altogether concur in a statement made by Sir Stafford Northcote that there was no reason why we should be uneasy or jealous at the progress Russia had made in Central Asia, and which was the result of the circumstances in which she found herself placed.

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK: When was that?

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: Just before I went to the India Office. In those sentiments I entirely agree. I have only to thank the House for the extreme indulgence with which it has listened to me. I have undertaken a somewhat difficult and rather laborious task, and there is only one more point to which I wish to refer. With regard to some matters, the Government have complained very bitterly of what they describe as the violent language out-of-doors. Well, I hope that no language has been used by me—I am sure I never intended to do so—at all personal in its character, or inconsistent with personal courtesy or private friendship. But I am bound to say that the whole transactions of this Afghan War are of a character which, in my opinion, justify the severest language which can be used in Party warfare. I believe it is a policy which has originated in weak and unmanly fear. It has been a policy of violence, sometimes approaching deceit. It has been a policy most injurious to the interests of the people of England; and, above all, a policy which has cast a lasting stain upon the honour of the British Empire.

Moved, That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for Copy of any Correspondence found at Cabul between the late Ameer Shere Ali Khan and the Russian Authorities in Turkestan or St. Petersburgh.—(*The Duke of Argyll.*)

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK: My Lords, it might be supposed from the speech you have just heard that events have never moved during the last 40 years, and that the policy of 40 years ago was that which was suitable in present emergencies, and that men ought to adhere to a certain definite rule which they have laid down for themselves under a particular state of circumstances, even after that state of circumstances has entirely changed. It has always been assumed by the noble Duke, and it seems to be the foundation of the speech he has made, that if it had not been for the present Government none of the events which have taken place would have taken place at all—that the Eastern Question would have been solved easily by the able Members of the former Government; and that, in fact, everything wrong which had happened had been brought on by the policy of the present Government. That seems to me totally opposed to the facts of the case—as, indeed, the whole history that he has given is opposed to the facts of the case. It is no disrespect to the noble Duke to say that his reading of events is totally different from mine. The Duke of Somerset, in the discussion in the winter of 1878, said—

> "Are you surprised men take totally different views of events as they occur, when you see how differently history is narrated according to the views of the writer?"

Well, I am prepared, as I said in 1878, when the noble Duke was not here, to adhere to the entire substance of that despatch, although I may have been wrong with respect to a certain date in regard to Khiva; but with respect to the special paragraph I adhere entirely to it, because I believe it was an accurate statement of the case. When the noble Duke implied that it was not an accurate statement, he refrained from telling the House that by the side of that paragraph there were references given to Papers which, a few days after, were in every man's hands. His telegrams were referred to specifically; and I say still, as I said then, I believe it to be a perfectly accurate account of what happened.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: And complete?

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK: And complete. When I refer to that part of the noble Duke's speech I will show that it is complete. I think that, perhaps, I should consult the convenience of the House by endeavouring to follow, as far as possible, the course which the noble Duke has taken. It is one which, I confess, I was not prepared he should take, because I thought the debate in the winter of 1878 had exhausted these early questions; and I think it a little extraordinary that the noble Duke, because he was not present on that occasion, should, having had an opportunity in the last Session of Parliament, have come forward now and gone into the minutest details, with extracts cut and dried, and brought forward all the questions which were fully debated, aye, and decided against the noble Duke. Upon this occasion, after his long indictment, and after speaking of the Government as having been false in all that they had done, and deceitful and treacherous, the noble Duke contents himself with moving for Papers which he knows nothing about, but about which he pretends to know a great deal. With respect to the Papers for which the noble Duke has moved, let me at once dispose of that part of the question. They will not be produced. The noble Duke has referred to *The Pioneer;* but he knows, or ought to know, that *The Pioneer* is not the Government official organ at present; and he knows, or ought to know, that a Press agent was appointed to give to all the papers that which was official information. The noble Duke forgets, or chooses to forget, that *The Pioneer* no longer occupies the place it formerly did. Again, I am to be answerable for what is stated by Sir Henry Rawlinson.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: No.

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK: Then, why are all these things quoted against me? What does the noble Duke endeavour to do? He endeavours to draw from the Government some statements respecting the Papers found at Cabul, when he knows perfectly well that by no single Member of the Government has a word been breathed as to the contents of those Papers, and that they have taken the utmost pains not to be guilty even of the smallest allusion to anything contained in them, believing that, not assenting to their production, silence in regard to those documents is fairest and best for the interests of the public. Now, the noble Duke, on a former occasion, said that if the Papers were refused he would not press his Motion; therefore, practically, there is no Motion before the House; but the noble Duke has taken your Lordships a long way back in making his statement. He began with the present condition of Afghanistan, which nobody more deeply deplores than I do; but when our policy is founded, as we believe, on justice, right, and advantage to our Empire, it is not because a great calamity may have occurred, or that calamities may occur in the future, that we are to be drawn aside from what we believe to be for the interests of the country. It is true the Envoy—a man of noble character, of whom no one can speak too highly—and those who accompanied him, perished in the discharge of their duty. It is deeply to be regretted; it is a source of great sorrow to those who were obliged to employ him on the service he was so ready to undertake. Are we to be told that because this has happened England must turn aside from her policy? If disaster to an Army or the murder of an Envoy had turned England aside, England would never have attained to the position which she occupies. Not long ago our Envoy in the Naga Hills, with 40 or 50 of his suite, was massacred; but nobody suggested that we should give up the Naga Hills, or no longer employ Residents in that part of the country, because the people were of a treacherous character. The noble Duke says that because what he calls a fierce light has played upon the transactions in Afghanistan England is to swerve from the policy which the Government has adopted, and which, I will tell the noble Duke, it means to pursue. He tells us that we make excuses with respect to Russia, and that those excuses are false. When I heard the noble Duke speak of Russia as a Power not to be weighed in this matter, and then say that if Russia interfered in Afghanistan he would be ready to use force and drive her from it—when I find a Member of a Government which entered into negotiations with Russia again and again with the view of coming to some arrangement with respect to Afghanistan, and non-interference with it, talking of us as going cap in hand to Russia, and being guarantors of a rotten Empire—I must ask what was done by the Treaty of 1871? Did not that guarantee that rotten Empire to which he alluded? Does the noble Duke mean to say the Treaty of 1856 gave no guarantee? I think no one can doubt that the Treaty of 1856 was a guarantee of the integrity and independence of that country; and by the Government of which the noble Duke was a Member, its main stipulations were renewed in 1871. Then, with respect to the noble Duke's references to Shere Ali. He at last admits that after 1873 Shere Ali was sulky. The noble Duke told us that Shere Ali came asking for extreme concessions. I am far from saying that he did not. He asked a great deal more, I have no doubt, than he thought he would get. The noble Duke was then at the head of the India Office. He tells us that Native Envoys are much better than British ones. It appears that his Viceroy (the Earl of Northbrook) thought it worth consideration, and worth while pressing upon the Ameer's Envoy, that we should have British Residents in different towns of Afghanistan. It stands to reason that for the dominant power a Native never could be a better Representative. He could represent you in much; but not in the position of an English Ambassador, who would speak with authority on your behalf. The real point is with respect to the passage the noble Duke read from my despatch. I stated that the Ameer had asked for certain things which the Government of that day had refused; that the Government in India had been prepared to go further than the Government at home; and that, in consequence of a missive from home, they did not go so far. Upon that point I think I shall show what will justify my statement. The noble Duke was not present on a former occasion when I was told he had meant certain things. I cannot contradict any assumed understanding between the noble Duke and his Viceroy. Nor is it necessary to my argument to throw doubt upon their having meant what respectively they have said. I had to look to the Papers, and I confess it appeared to me that, according to them, the statement I made was correct. First of all, there comes the telegram which the noble Duke read of the 1st of July, 1873, from the Secretary of State to the Viceroy—

"Your telegram of the 27th June. I do not object to the general sense of the paragraph, which you quote as a communication to Russia from the Foreign Office; but great caution is necessary in assuring Ameer of material assistance which may raise undue and unfounded expectation. He already shows symptoms of claiming more than we may wish to give."—[*Afghanistan*, No. 1, p. 108.]

That being sent from home, it seemed to me that it put a check on the Viceroy in the first instance, and told him to be very cautious how far he admitted any of those demands for material assistance. On the 24th of July the Viceroy telegraphed to the Secretary of State—

"Ameer of Cabul alarmed at Russian progress, dissatisfied with general assurances [they were not specific as to material assistance], and anxious to know definitely how far he may rely on our help if invaded. I propose assuring him that if he unreservedly accepts and acts on our advice in all external relations we will help him with money, arms, and troops, if necessary, to expel unprovoked invasion. We to be the judge of the necessity. Answer by telegraph quickly."—[*Ibid.*]

There was a telegram specifying what they were prepared to do for the Ameer, and it would have been a simple matter to have sent an answer of approval; but what did the Government reply?—

"India Office, dated 26th July, 1873.

"Cabinet thinks you should inform Ameer that we do not at all share his alarm, and consider there is no cause for it; but you may assure him we shall maintain our settled policy in favour of Afghanistan, if he abides by our advice in external affairs."—[*Ibid.*]

Material assistance is asked—money, arms, and troops; you reply that you will adhere to your "settled policy in favour of Afghanistan." "Favour," not even and support promised. What follows? There were conversations going on, and the noble Earl who was Viceroy (the Earl of Northbrook) wrote to the Ameer—

"I have had some conversation with your Envoy on the subject of the policy which the British Government would pursue in the event of an attack upon your Highness' territories. A copy of the record of these conversations is attached to this letter. But the question is, in my opinion, one of such importance, that the discussion of it should be postponed to a more suitable opportunity."—[*Ibid.* p. 116.]

What is the meaning of that, "postponed to a more suitable opportunity," if a pledge has been given and a promise made? What was the question postponed? To that no reply has ever been given. What did the Ameer make of it? Did he say—"You have given me a promise in these conversations? You have gone beyond the promise of Lord Mayo?" Far from it. He said—

"The friendly declaration of your Excellency to the effect that you will maintain towards myself the same policy which was followed by Lord Lawrence and Lord Mayo has been the cause of much gratification to me. My friend! under this circumstance of the case it was not necessary to hold all those conversations with Syud Noor Mahomed Shah at Simla. The understanding arrived at in Umballa is quite sufficient."—[*Ibid.* p. 119.]

I ask anybody reading those documents, without any interpretation from those who wrote or received them, whether I did not give an accurate account of what appeared on the face of the documents—that the Viceroy of India had been prepared to give these assurances to the Ameer, that from home he was checked, and that eventually he said the matter was postponed to another opportunity? At all events, that is my reading of history, and I believe it to be a just and true one. There had not been any forcing of officers on Afghanistan when the Ameer refused them. What did my noble Friend (the Marquess of Salisbury) write on this subject?—

"The independence of Afghanistan is a matter of importance to the British Government, and, as an essential part of arrangements for its protection, Her Majesty's Government would still be glad to station Agents upon whom they could rely at Herat and Candahar. In the event, therefore, of the Ameer, within a reasonable time, spontaneously manifesting a desire to come to a friendly understanding with your Excellency on the basis of the terms lately offered to but declined by him, his advances should not be rejected."—[*Ibid.* p. 224.]

It was added that if, on the other hand, he continued to maintain an attitude of isolation and scarcely veiled hostility, the British Government stood unpledged, and would be at liberty to adopt such measures for the protection and permanent regulation of the North-Western Frontier as circumstances and due regard for our interests might dictate. That seems to me to be a perfectly intelligible position. It is assumed that Lord Mayo had come to a settled determination that he would not have European Agents in Afghanistan. I quite admit that his mind was against it, and that, on the whole, he thought it would not be beneficial. But how long had he been in India at the time? At the time of the Umballa Conferences he had had only a month or two to consider these great questions. He described his policy as an "intermediate policy." Anyone who knew that noble Lord would be perfectly certain that he would not come to a hurried conclusion in a single month as to what his policy ought to be. I have seen in the newspapers a letter Lord Mayo wrote to Sir Henry Rawlinson, which shows that his mind was still open on the subject, and that he had not concluded finally against sending European Agents into Afghanistan. Writing on the 10th of June, 1869, he said generally that he was opposed to sending European politicals, &c., and sceptical as to the propriety of placing a British Resident at Herat; but—

> "I will reserve my opinion until I hear the reasons. I do not believe from what the Ameer said at Umballa that he would offer any opposition to an English Agent being placed at Candahar, Herat, or Balkh, though he would strongly object to the appearance of one at Cabul. But I do not think he wished for it anywhere, fearing the effect it might have on his own subjects."

What Colonel Burne, Dr. Bellew, and Captain Grey have written of the conversations in Durbar shows that Lord Mayo had the question in his mind as one open to consideration, one on which he was ready to hear arguments, and that he did not consider himself precluded from doing so by any pledge or statement on the subject. It seems to me clear, from what is recorded of the Conferences, that if the Ameer could have obtained some of the concessions he desired he would have been ready to admit English officers to some of the towns of Afghanistan. The noble Duke interprets the Treaties as precluding us from urging the matter; but I read them differently. It was a question which was clearly open to re-consideration, and the Viceroy of the noble Duke (the Earl of Northbrook) was the person who re-opened it. The proceedings of 1877 were very long; they do not seem to me to be relevant on the present occasion, and they were fully discussed in 1878. What they amount to is this: A proposition was made, in conformity with the wish expressed by my noble Friend then at the head of the India Office (the Marquess of Salisbury), that English agents should be admitted into Afghanistan. The noble Earl, in the exercise of his right as Viceroy, resisted the proposal as inopportune, while admitting that advantages would be derived from carrying it out, and sent home reasons against it. The noble Duke, who groundlessly accused Lord Lytton of being a wild elephant carrying on a policy regardless of orders from home, praises the resistance offered to the Secretary of State by the noble Earl. The noble Duke says we made pretence of giving more than we really did give by the Treaty; but what is the real state of the case? The Envoy was furnished with copies of the Treaty, with all its conditions set out in full for him to consider and study, and the Ameer was as capable of understanding it as anyone in this House. He was quite awake as to what we offered to him, and he refused it. He knew that the foundation of negotiations was the admission of Residents into the Frontier cities of Afghanistan. He sent to us an Envoy, who passed his whole time in creating delays; and when he died, his Colleague was found to have no instructions and no authority to accept any terms. We are taunted with having then broken off all relations with the Ameer. We should have been wanting in self-respect had we not withdrawn from the negotiations; but we gave him an opportunity of reconsidering his position and of coming to a better mind. No pressure was put upon him; but he was left to himself. What then happened? A Russian Embassy appeared at Cabul, and in my mind we had then but one course to adopt. I must say that on this point we have had one of the most extraordinary publications that ever was penned, and that, too, from the Under Secretary of the noble Duke when he was at the head of Indian affairs. I was greatly amused when the noble Duke was saying that we did not seem to have a policy, and that we did not know how to deal with the difficulties which he said we had created, when I thought of the extraordinary pamphlet of Mr. Grant Duff. That gentleman seems to think that Liberals can do no wrong, and he certainly lives in a Paradise the entrance to which is not gained by wisdom. Mr. Grant Duff says that if the Liberals had been in Office none of these things would have happened. But he adds that if we had heard of the reception of a Russian Mission at Cabul, we should have said at St. Petersburg—

> "Although this is not a direct breach of your agreement with Lord Clarendon in 1869, yet, under all the circumstances, you must see that it is not in accordance with the spirit of that agreement that you should be at Cabul just at this moment, and we must request you to withdraw."

And Mr. Grant Duff most refreshingly adds—

> "Such requests are always complied with by nations which do not mean to go to war."

I assume by this that his polite request was to be enforced by war on our part. He then goes on—

> "The next step would have been to say to the Ameer in the most courteous language—'We have had but to say one word, and the Russian Mission disappears from your capital. Do not you think you had better get back into a good humour,' and very soon he would have been amenable as he was at Umballa."

Even Mr. Grant Duff has to go back to the time of Lord Mayo. But this is the policy the noble Duke and his late Under Secretary would substitute for that which we have adopted. I am very reluctant to speak harshly with respect to a great country with which we are on terms of amity; but it cannot be denied that there was a correspondence kept up by Russia with Cabul for the purpose of fostering interest with the Ameer. What was it for? We had been told that Afghanistan was entirely beyond the sphere of Russian influence; but Russian messengers were constantly coming to the Ameer. Even the noble Duke is in favour of "a strong, independent, and friendly Afghanistan;" but we found we were absolutely shut out, and that a Russian Mission was established in Cabul—that city in which we had been told it was impossible to receive Europeans, and to protect them from the assaults of fanatics. Yet for a long period a Russian Mission was there; the members of it went freely about the town; were received everywhere with honour; they were loaded with presents, and it was obvious that the Russians were on the best terms with the Ameer. The noble Duke said that there was no need for us to interfere with Russia in Central Asia; and I say, as I did last year, that there was room for both of us in Central Asia, but not room for both in Afghanistan. The noble Duke must know that the Russian Mission was sent there for real and definite objects. Afghanistan was to be the basis for Russia to attack us. There is no doubt about it. No Russian would deny it. England, whose policy for 40 years had been that Afghanistan should be friendly, strong, and independent, was to find her influence suddenly threatened or destroyed, the friendship and strength transferred to a hostile Power to which she would probably become dependent. What was our course? We were to stand by and request Russia to withdraw. Afghanistan, which was to be the buffer between us and Russia, had become an instrument of Russia for our destruction. I do not think that, in the view of Lord Lawrence, the Afghans were ever much to be relied upon. Lord Lawrence expected that in case of invasion of India every Afghan would join in the attack. Was it not a serious matter, then, when a great military Power had put her hand on Afghanistan, which had the command of the Passes in India? The noble Duke said, with justice, we were most reluctant to go to war. We sent a Mission to Shere Ali. It was stopped, not, indeed, with insolent language, for the Afghan commander was a friend of Major Cavagnari; but he had orders to fire upon and repel it by force. The insult to us in the face of India was not less complete because it was not in words. We sent an Ultimatum, giving the Ameer an opportunity to retire from the position he had taken up. That was rejected. No answer came during the time allowed, and when it did come it was of such a character that it could not be received as any answer at all. Then we advanced on Afghanistan. To the great regret of many, we abstained from advancing upon the capital, which was a policy adopted lest we should break up the country. If I am asked whether it is only in the case of a strong and independent Afghanistan that we should have as effective a guarantee for the security of our Indian Empire as before, I will say that may be a matter of argument. When you have a strong man at the head of the State he is generally an ambitious man who wishes to work for himself and not to consider his neighbours. But when you have a weaker class to deal with, a class who may have to rely on you, you may have better means of controlling their foreign relations without interfering with their internal affairs. The noble

Duke spoke as if my noble Friend the other night used language with respect to the former condition of Afghanistan which did not appear to be justified. But your Lordships will remember that it is a very short time since Afghanistan was united. Lord Lawrence, in a Minute dated November 28, 1868, says—

> "The history of the country is a history of anarchy and civil war. The Suddozai brothers were always each other's worst enemies. Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan had the advantage of succeeding to a family which was hated and despised. He was at feud with some of his brothers, with whom he waged war, and whom he expelled the country. He had the utmost difficulty in controlling the others. He barely maintained a semblance of order to the end of his life. Long before his death, everyone had foreseen, he had himself predicted, commotion, conflict, and war to the death between his own sons. Can there really be a hope that we can bind together such discordant elements? Is there any Chief likely to come to the front whom it would be right for us to endeavour to maintain in full power over the country?"—[*Ibid.* p. 61.]

Afghanistan, therefore, is of very recent cohesion, and was brought together by a strong man. Shere Ali, too, fought for his Throne for five or six years before he brought the whole of Afghanistan under his rule; but your Lordships will agree with me that over a great part of Afghanistan he had very little influence; though he was feudal superior he was very little else. Lord Lawrence, in the same Minute, says—

> "It appears to me, also, that it will always be found exceedingly difficult, for any extended period, to maintain a united and strong Government in Afghanistan. The genius of the Chiefs and people, as evinced in the independent Pathan communities of the Border, is evidence to this effect. A Chief may now and then arise, who may for a time unite the different Provinces under one rule; but when he has passed away the tendency again will be to separation. With the single exception of the pressure of a common enemy, and even this circumstance will not always avail, there appear to be no ties to bind the Afghans together."—[*Ibid.*]

With regard to what happened after that terrible catastrophe, which we all so deeply lament, the murder of our Envoy, I am sure there is not one of your Lordships who thinks that any course was open to us but one. Our Army had to retrace its steps and to go back and to take possession of Cabul and the neighbourhood. Yakoob Khan came into our camp and told General Roberts that he desired to abdicate; and after time given for deliberation, as he persisted, his abdication was accepted. At the best, he had been a helpless witness of the murder of sacred guests; but his conduct might almost be treated as connivance, and such a Ruler could not be a useful friend. We had possession of Cabul, we were bound to administer it so far as we could, and to see that subordination should be kept up. A Proclamation was issued to that effect; but there has been no desire to repel the Native Sirdars. On the contrary, we invited them to come in and discuss with us the best mode of governing the country. And though it may be necessary that we should put down any Forces that may be brought against us in that part of Afghanistan, it is not impossible, nor even improbable, that we may be able to hand over the country to Sirdars who may be able to hold their own. With regard to the position of the noble Duke and myself, it must be remembered that the noble Duke has had a long time to prepare; and as it is not usual to apprise the enemy of one's movements, I had to wait until I knew what he would say before I could answer. My position was like that of our old Frontier. I could not tell by what Passes my opponent would break out. But one thing I assert — there has been no concealment about our policy, and I venture to say there has been no want of honesty about our policy. The noble Duke complains that the Papers were not published when they ought to have been. But they were published, and Parliament had a long discussion on the subject since the war closed. It is true the noble Duke was absent; but, having taken a great interest in the subject, he has written a book which he tells us nobody has answered. I do not know how many may have read it; but to many a busy man it is a task of no ordinary moment to get through a pamphlet in two bulky volumes—a more lengthened one to reply to it. And when I see the details into which the noble Duke has gone to-night, I feel that if I attempted to reply in equal detail, instead of being about to conclude, I should have gone on till midnight. With regard to some of the points referred to, I will say that we sent the Envoy to Cabul with the consent of Yakoob Khan himself, and the escort sent was considered by Sir Louis Cavagnari as sufficient for the purpose, and it was not considered as one at all likely to give offence. At first all seemed to go on well. But there were in Cabul disbanded regiments clamouring for their pay, and, no doubt, some persons or other hounded them on to attack the Envoy. I believe if the Ameer could have been aroused from his torpor and induced to take a part himself, as he was bound to do, for those under his protection, that calamity would never have occurred. But as it was, the rising was joined by more and more of the rabble of the town, and a regular siege was laid to the place where these heroic men were. Sir Louis Cavagnari seems to have fallen early, and the others fought bravely. One of them, a gallant young Irishman, more than two or three times endeavoured almost alone to charge the mob from the door of the Embassy, but at last he, too, fell; and I must for a moment pause to say with respect to that young man, having received a great deal of information on the subject, that he had a brilliant career before him; he understood well the business in which he was engaged, and he was not afraid of the consequences which his duty entailed upon him. They were, no doubt, ignorant of what was prepared for them, for up to the very last they had reason to trust the Ameer. Shortly before Sir Louis Cavagnari wrote in one of his letters that he believed that the Ameer would prove a good ally. But the outbreak was a sudden one. As to events tending to make the two Empires of Russia and England conterminous in Asia, it appears to me that we are between two tides, both of which appear to be rolling one towards the other; but if Russia is faithful to that which she has always said—that Afghanistan is outside the sphere of her influence—I see no reason why Afghanistan should not remain between ourselves and her as it has always done. We have taken up a position for the maintenance of our Border in India; we have taken it up irrevocably; and though the provisions of the Treaty of Gandamak may have perished, the principles of the Treaty remain, as has been said in the Speech from the Throne, and by those principles we mean to stand. The noble Duke knows, and no one better, how events control people, and how people are controlled by events. But I think the noble Duke was not justified in the way in which he has spoken of a noble Lord who is Viceroy in India, when he used such strong language and quoted the Ninth Commandment against him. That noble Lord is absent from this House; before another year has passed he may be here to answer for himself, and I think it would have been far better for the noble Duke to have waited to hear what was to be said before throwing out such an insinuation against a noble Lord who is absent and who is in a position of the greatest difficulty. The noble Duke knows very well that the crisis is of a dangerous and difficult character; but what does he do? He knows very well that the words of a former Secretary of State will ring through India; and yet he tries to bring into contempt a Governor General, by doing which he really brings into contempt his country. He is, after all, the Representative of his country in India, and I cannot think it becomes the noble Duke, at a time of crisis, to use the strongest language and to impute a want of veracity and downright falsehood to the man who presides over the Indian Empire, an imputation which I am convinced will be found to be quite unjustifiable. In conclusion, I will only say this. We have been forced, for the sake of the protection of India, to take the steps which we have taken. We have violated no Treaty; we have infringed no pledges. We have used no force where it was unnecessary; we have broken no law, custom, Treaty, or pledge. I assent to the noble Duke's aphorism that an Englishman's word is as good as his bond; but I defy him to show me, when he goes through the Papers, that forfeiture of our word has taken place. We are now in this position. We hold the Frontiers of India strongly, and we hold the Passes by our own Forces. We have trusted others and they have failed us. We must become our own porters, and secure our own gates; and we are determined that, whatever may be the course of events, for the protection of our vast Dominion, we will continue to hold the advantages we have obtained.

THE EARL OF NORTHBROOK: My Lords, when the noble Viscount (Viscount Cranbrook) complains that the noble Duke has brought forward this subject to-night, he forgets that Members of the Cabinet have been going about the country making election speeches upon the very topics which he now argues ought not to be revived. I was somewhat amused when the noble Viscount endeavoured to explain the interpretation placed by him on certain documents which I received when I had the honour to hold the Office of Governor General of India. He apparently thinks that he is far more competent to interpret them than I am myself. I can only say again, and I do say most emphatically, that, having received an answer from the noble Duke, in his official capacity, to a question from me whether I might give such assurances as I wished to the Ameer of Afghanistan, I gave those assurances. It seems now that the noble Viscount thinks that no assurances were given at all. That is quite a new doctrine, and I must repeat that, having been Governor General of India, and having had a solemn interview with the Minister of Shere Ali, I did give assurances which I meant to be, and considered to be, binding on the British Government. I must add that the interpretation put on that transaction by the noble Viscount is entirely different from that placed upon it by the Government of India. They did not by any means take the view that no promise had been given to Shere Ali; for in their despatch on May 10, 1877, they said—"The British Government were prepared to assure the Ameer that they would afford him assistance in money and arms." That passage entirely contradicts the statement of the noble Viscount, and if I wished for further evidence—for during his speech I began to think that I did not know what I had been doing—I might turn to the evidence of the Envoy himself, who, at the Peshawur Conference, after explaining the circumstances of the case, said that at the third interview I gave him assurances which were perfectly clear and satisfactory. I regret that the noble Viscount should not candidly admit that his despatch was not accurate, instead of again attempting to defend it. Now, with regard to the criticism of the noble Viscount upon the noble Duke's interpretation of the Treaties with Dost Mahomed Khan, I can only say that I entirely concur in the view taken by the noble Duke, and hold with him that the Treaties were binding, and that they bound us not to use compulsion upon the Ameer for the purpose of sending British officers into Afghanistan. The noble Viscount has said that I desired to have British officers in that country. Certainly, had it been possible at that time, it would have been very desirable; but the difficulties were such that the Ameer declined to allow them to enter his dominions. My interpretation of the Treaties was, that in those circumstances I thought it would be wrong to use any compulsion upon the Ameer to induce him to receive them. The contention of the noble Duke was that compulsion was employed. Now, what is compulsion, and what is not? Is it compulsion to tell the Ameer that if he does not do what is wanted, the protection of the British Government will be withdrawn? If that is compulsion, that was done. Is it compulsion to withdraw every promise of protection that had been given to the Ameer by former Viceroys in the most solemn terms? If that is compulsion, that also was done. And yet the noble Viscount says that no compulsion has been used towards Shere Ali.

My Lords, it is not my intention to refer further to the causes of the Afghan War of 1878. I have given my reasons for objecting to the policy of Her Majesty's Government which preceded that war, and for thinking that the war itself was unnecessary and impolitic. Subsequent events have confirmed me in the opinions which I then expressed; but I do not wish unnecessarily to revert to transactions in which I was myself personally concerned. Putting aside, then, the War of 1878, I wish to submit to your Lordships' consideration some observations upon the events which have occurred since the death of Shere Ali Khan in February, 1879, and upon the present condition of Afghanistan. I shall only allude to the military operations in order to express my hearty admiration of the gallantry and discipline of the officers and men, British and Native, who have been engaged in them. I feel confident that it will be the earnest desire both of the Government of India and of Her Majesty's Government to treat the troops with liberality in any questions that may arise relating to their pay and allowances; and I hope the report that I have seen is correct, that those Native regiments which have now been continuously employed in Afghanistan for some time will shortly be relieved. I need not dwell upon the reasons which make such reliefs essential in order to maintain the efficiency and popularity of the Native Army of India. Turning to political events, I do not see what else the Government of India could have done, after the death of Shere Ali Khan, than to enter into negotiations with his son Yakoob, who appears to have been generally recognized in Afghanistan as his successor. The position of Yakoob, however, at that time was very insecure; and as soon as we were satisfied of his sincere desire for peace, and had determined to enter into negotiations with him, it was clearly to our interest to strengthen his authority. I do not think, my Lords, that the measures which were taken by the Government of India, probably under the instructions of Her Majesty's Government, were well calculated to do this. Cessions of Afghan territory were insisted upon from Yakoob, in spite of his almost pathetic appeals to the generosity of, to use his own phrase, the "strong and grand British Government." Any cession of territory is notoriously unpopular in Afghanistan, and the acceptance by Yakoob of our terms in this particular must greatly have weakened his position at Cabul. I know, my Lords, that the territory in question was considered by Her Majesty's Government to be desirable in order to strengthen the North-Western Frontier of India. I think it was right to retain complete control over the Afridi Tribes, so as to secure the command of the Khyber Pass; but this involved no cession of Afghan territory. We have been furnished with no opinions from the Commander-in-Chief or other military authorities in India with regard to the other territorial arrangements of the Treaty of Gandamak. Pending any further reasons which may be forthcoming, those arrangements appear to me either to be of no advantage in themselves, or of no advantage sufficient to counterbalance the serious disadvantage that they weakened our moral and political position in Afghanistan. After the conclusion of the Treaty of Gandamak, I think that the Government of India were ill-advised in sending a British Embassy to Cabul so soon. The arrival of the Embassy, the announcement that Yakoob Khan was about to visit the Provinces of Afghanistan, accompanied by the British Envoy, and that he was to pay his respects to the Viceroy at Calcutta in the winter, were just the very things which were most likely to rouse the apprehensions of the people of Afghanistan — jealous, as all mountaineers are, of their independence—to strengthen the fanatical party opposed to the British alliance, and to weaken the position of the Ameer. I am satisfied that the wise course would have been not to have insisted upon any cessions of Afghan territory at Gandamak, and, while reserving the right to send British officers as Envoys or Residents into Afghanistan, to have waited until Yakoob had more effectually established his authority in Cabul before using that right. We might with advantage, at the same time, have assisted him with such supplies of money as he might have required. If some such policy as I have indicated had been followed, I believe that a peace as permanent as any that could be made with such a country as Afghanistan might have been concluded in the spring of 1879, and that the events which we all of us now deplore might, in all human probability, have been avoided.

My Lords, I do not desire to dwell upon the fate of the British Embassy at Cabul, save for the purpose of expressing my sense of the loss which the Queen has sustained by the death of Sir Louis Cavagnari, whose high character and great ability are well known; and of the members of the Embassy, all of them men of distinction and high promise. I will add one word in recognition of the gallantry of the Native escort who gave their lives in the unavailing defence of the Residency. Those Native officers and men have added another noble feat to the record of deeds of daring and devotion which form the proud history of the Queen's own Corps of Guides. It is, however, only just to the memory of Shere Ali Khan, the late Ameer of Afghanistan, that I should observe how completely the objection raised by him and his father, Dost Mahomed Khan, to the reception of British Residents in Afghanistan, on the ground that their safety could not be insured against fanatical attacks, has been justified by recent events. The members of the British Embassy at Cabul have been murdered, and there have been frequent fanatical attacks upon British officers and men in Candahar, in one of which Lieutenant Willis, of the Royal Artillery, was killed. The massacre of the Embassy made it necessary to send a British

Army to Cabul in order to punish the guilty persons, for Yakoob Khan was evidently too weak to fulfil this duty. This has been done. Cabul and Candahar have been occupied; and there cannot, at the present time, be less than 50,000 British and Native troops in Afghanistan. Yakoob Khan abdicated on the 12th of October last, and since that time supreme authority in Afghanistan has been exercised by the British Government. The terms of the Proclamation by which this was announced were sent to India by Her Majesty's Government, and promulgated on the 28th of October, and the position has remained unchanged during the four months that have since passed. An announcement was made in the Proclamation that, after consulting with the principal Chiefs of the country, the British Government "would declare its will as to the future permanent arrangements for the good government of the people;" but no such declaration has yet been made. It is clear, from all the news which has recently arrived, that some decided expression of policy is absolutely necessary in order to satisfy the people of Afghanistan, and to guide the actions of the British officers employed there. There have, no doubt, been difficulties in the way of making any such declaration before. But the position of affairs now appears to afford a favourable opportunity. The season of the year prevents active operations in the field. The best opinions, especially that of Sir Gholam Hussein Khan, seem to indicate that it is unlikely that any other combination of equal strength to that which failed last Christmas can be organized against us. Our military position ought by this time to be secure, if only our Forces be not frittered away in small detachments about the country. I, therefore, heard with great satisfaction the announcement made to your Lordships the other night by the Prime Minister that the policy of Her Majesty's Government is "opposed to annexation" and "in favour of the people of Afghanistan being governed by their own Chief or Chiefs." I trust that when the Prime Minister addresses your Lordships tonight he will tell us that this announcement, which has been so distinctly made in this House, will be make known without delay with equal distinctness to the people of Afghanistan. Your Lordships may, perhaps, expect that I should give some indication of the manner in which, in my opinion, the affairs of Afghanistan can best be settled. I should be glad indeed to assist Her Majesty's Government to the best of my knowledge and ability; but I have not sufficient information to enable me to speak with any confidence upon matters of detail. For reasons of which I am not aware, no official information of any importance upon the political condition of Afghanistan has been communicated to Parliament in the Papers which have been placed upon our Table by Her Majesty's commands. We have no despatches from Sir Donald Stewart, who appears to have managed affairs in Candahar with great ability and good judgment; none from Major St. John, the political officer at Candahar; none from Sir Frederick Roberts, which enter at any length into the political condition of the neighbourhood of Cabul; none from the political officers at Cabul, Jellalabad, or Peshawur; none from the officers employed in the Kurram Valley. Under these circumstances, the only opinions which I can venture to offer must be very short and very general. It appears to me, looking both to military and to political considerations, that it will not be wise to extend the area of our present liabilities in Afghanistan. I look with some anxiety, therefore, to the results which may follow from the despatch of an Afghan Governor in the British interest into Afghan Turkestan, with British money, and protected by Native levies raised in the country. I think to raise any considerable force of such levies would prove a source of embarrassment, and possibly even of danger. I think it would be particularly unwise and detrimental to British interests to extend our liabilities still further by permitting or encouraging Persia to occupy Herat. In the first place, I cannot see by what right the British Government can dispose of Herat. That city does not belong to them. It lies 350 miles from the British Force in Candahar, and has not been conquered by us. I think that it is unlikely that Persia would undertake to obtain possession of Herat without some guarantee on the part of the British Government. It is our interest and our desire, no doubt, to see Persia prosperous, and to maintain the most friendly relations with her; but, to put the matter in the mildest terms, I can see nothing in the present conditions of Persia which makes it desirable for the British Government to undertake the liabilities which would be involved by such a guarantee. Lastly, my Lords, the suggestion is contrary to the policy which has been steadily pursued by successive British Governments for many years. I do not say that circumstances might not justify a change in that policy; but I desire to point out that it rests upon solid grounds. Moreover, at the present time, the British occupation of Afghanistan is regarded with less hostility at Candahar than elsewhere. I know that the feeling among the Afghans of those parts is very hostile to the Persians, who are of a different religious faith, and who have constantly been at feud with them. I can imagine no rumour which is more likely to set against us Afghans of influence at Candahar and elsewhere than that it is our intention to encourage Persia to occupy Afghan territory. My Lords, if we wish to stand well with the Afghans, and to leave behind us a friendly Afghanistan, so far as recent unfortunate events will admit of it, I feel assured that nothing can be more politic than that the Prime Minister should assure your Lordships to-night, not only, as he did the other day, that no arrangement has actually been made for the occupation of Herat by Persia, but that such a project, if it has ever been entertained, has been definitely abandoned. With regard to Herat, I will only say further that the policy of the British Government, for more than one generation, has been clear and decided—namely, that that city cannot be permitted to come into the possession of Russia. The Russian Government are well aware of this; and it cannot, in my opinion, be too plainly declared. My Lords, I regret that the policy of Her Majesty's Government, adopted contrary to the advice of all those who had any knowledge of Afghanistan, should have had the effect of destroying the condition of that country, which, I believe, was the best for the interests of India. I mean that the whole of Afghanistan should be under the government of a single Ruler. It is probable that, as indicated in one of the despatches of the noble Viscount opposite (Viscount Cranbrook), the country may now, for a time at least, become again divided, as it has been before; but, in my judgment, the Afghans are more likely to come to some tolerable settlement of their internal affairs, if left to themselves, than by means of our intervention.

My Lords, the apprehension of danger to India, from the advance of Russia in Central Asia, naturally disposes people in England to approve of any policy which has for its object the defence of the Indian Empire, of which we are all so proud. I will venture to make a few observations to your Lordships upon this subject. Danger to India from Russia may arise, in the first place, from an invasion. That invasion is impossible. I do not know that the reasons showing how groundless such an alarm is can be more pithily put than in the words used by the Prime Minister at the Mansion House in November, 1878. On that occasion, the noble Earl said—

> "The base of operations is so remote, the communications so difficult, and the aspect of the country so forbidding, that we have long arrived at the opinion that the invasion of the Empire by passing the mountains, which form our North-Western Frontier, is one which we need not dread."

The experience which we have ourselves gained since that time, of the difficulty of providing transport and supplies for the Force which we have sent into Afghanistan—a small Force compared with the Army which would be required for an invasion of India—should, I think, be sufficient to re-assure anyone who may be doubtful upon this matter. Indeed, such an invasion, although it may be occasionally used as the basis of popular appeals, has never been dwelt upon as a serious contingency by any person of authority who has either spoken or written upon the subject. But, it is said, although an invasion is impossible, we have all heard of Russian intrigues; these are what we fear, and these we must take steps to counteract. Such intrigues, my Lords, must be either within or without British India. I have never heard of any evidence of Russian intrigues in India. Such intrigues, if they should be attempted, will never succeed so long as the people of India are well-governed, and the Native Princes and Chiefs are treated with sympathy and justice. No foreign intrigues need be feared in a country where the people are prosperous and contented. But these intrigues may be outside India, and particularly in Afghanistan. My Lords, in my opinion, no

Russian intrigues are likely to have any effect upon the people of Afghanistan. Those who apprehend this judge from what they have seen of Russian influence in European Turkey; but forget that while, in the one case, there was a population of the same religion and race as the Russians, in the other, the people differ from the Russians in race, religion, and habits. If it be said that Russian intrigues will be, and have been, used, not with the people of Afghanistan, but with the Ruler of the country, I answer that undoubtedly such intrigues may arise—it is impossible to guarantee the good faith and friendliness of all Afghans. The real question is, whether such intrigues are likely to do us any serious injury, and how they can best be met? I read in the Indian papers the other day the story, which it seems from what he has said to-night that the noble Viscount (Viscount Cranbrook) believes, of an agreement said to have been made between Shere Ali Khan and some Russian Agent for the invasion of India. Probably, like most other stories, it has no foundation in fact; but I wish to observe that to one who knows anything of the Afghan power such an idea is simply ridiculous. The Regular troops of Afghanistan have never been able to hold their own against our troops in the field, and if they ventured into the plains of India they would be swept away like chaff before the wind. The real strength of the Afghans consists in their irregular levies, which are formidable in their own country, but useless for purposes of attack beyond it. My Lords, it is a popular error which is worth correcting that Afghanistan is our immediate neighbour in the North-West. That is not so. Our neighbours, for the most part, are Tribes either entirely independent of the Ameer of Afghanistan or yielding him only a nominal allegiance. No Russian intrigues are likely to affect those Tribes if they are dealt with firmly and considerately by us. I well remember once having to consult the principal officers of the Punjab on the question whether our North-Western Frontier would be disturbed if the Ameer of Afghanistan were known to be unfriendly; and they told me that they did not think it would make any serious difference in the conduct of the Tribes. The experience of the last four years has shown that they were right. Any interference of Russian officers in Afghanistan would be very unpopular among the people. The Government of India have assured us that "all the national sentiments and prejudices" of the Afghans were opposed to the intimacy of Shere Ali Khan with Russia in 1878; and, as was the case with him, a Ruler who introduced Russian officers into his country would assuredly endanger the stability of his position. One thing at least, my Lords, is clear—that it would be of no advantage to us that we should invade the country whose Ruler we might suspect of intrigues. To do this would exchange the temporary inconvenience of the faithlessness of an individual for the real evil of the hostility of a nation.

My Lords, I must say a very few words upon the subject of Merv. Six years ago, when I was in India, I was anxious that the Russian Government should be dissuaded, if possible, from advancing to Merv. That they had a just cause of quarrel then with the Turkomans I know, because some Russian prisoners were detained at Merv, whose relief I tried to effect through the good offices of Shere Ali Khan; but whether he succeeded or not I have never heard. My reason for wishing the Russians not to go to Merv was, not that I had any apprehensions of that place, in its present condition and that of the country which surrounds it, becoming a base of operations against India, but because the Turkomans, if driven out of Merv by the Russians, would have taken refuge in Afghanistan, and not improbably have given rise to troubles between Russia and Afghanistan, which I wished to prevent. My Lords, I trust that there is no foundation for the idea that the British Government are disposed, directly or indirectly, to assist the Turkoman Tribes against Russia. We have, in my opinion, no more right to interfere there than the Russians have to interfere with our operations in Afghanistan. But, besides this, I have no hesitation in asserting that to ally ourselves with the Turkomans would be a disgrace to this country. Their principal source of wealth consists in plunder, and slaves, whom they carry off by raids upon their neighbours, especially the Persians, and hand over to the slave merchants who supply the slave bazaars of Central Asia. I know not what the cause of the Russian quarrel with them now is; but this I know—that by means of the extension of Russian power and influence over what are called the Khanates of Bokhara, Khiva, and Khokand, this inhuman traffic in slaves has been greatly checked, and that after the conquest of Khiva by Russia many thousands of Persian slaves were restored to liberty. Any noble Lord who desires to know more of these Turkomans will find much information in Dr. Bellew's travels in Persia in 1873, to which allusion has already been made by the noble Duke behind me (the Duke of Argyll). I feel sure that if the true character and history of the Turkomans were generally known, no one would recommend that they should receive any countenance or protection from this country.

My Lords, the opinion which I have expressed, that there is no danger of a Russian attack upon India, or of any serious result from Russian intrigues with our neighbours, does not imply that I am insensible to the critical position of the relations between England and Russia in Asia at the present moment. We have advanced from India into Afghanistan. We hear of the assembly of Russian troops in Russian Turkestan. Troubles may arise in Afghan Turkestan, possibly actually, certainly supposed to be, fomented by Russian influences. Within a few months we shall be so placed that any day the indiscretion of some officer, or the caprice of some Asiatic Chief, may produce a situation in which one of two high-spirited nations may have either to submit to what may appear to be a rebuff and a humiliation, or to appeal to arms. Is it necessary, my Lords, that this should continue? Can no stop be put to a rivalry which is detrimental to the interests of both countries? To anyone who looks beyond the events of the moment, there is something almost appalling in the position of the British and Russian Empires in Asia. These two gigantic forces, which have hitherto moved, each in its own sphere, over the mountains and plains of Asia, diffusing, on the whole, peace and order over countries which were formerly the prey of anarchy and rapine, appear now to be impelled by some fatal attraction to meet in deadly conflict. It is the duty and the privilege of statesmen at the head of affairs to foresee and to avert such calamities. Within the last two years we have been on the verge of war with Russia, and susceptibilities have unavoidably been aroused on both sides. But the Treaty of Berlin is now a matter of history. Peace is the plain interest of Russia, as it is also the plain interest of England. It is, in my humble opinion, the imperative duty of Her Majesty's Government to lose no time in putting an end, so far as in them lies, to the present condition of affairs, the danger of which I have endeavoured to indicate; and they could have no better instrument for their purpose than Her Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg. The noble Earl the Prime Minister, four years ago, in the House of Commons, used wise and peaceful language with regard to British and Russian interests in Asia. I trust that he will repeat the same sentiments to-night, and give your Lordships some assurance that those sentiments will be, or have already been, accompanied by diplomatic action. Such an announcement would, I am convinced, be greeted by the solid approval of the people of England.

LORD DENMAN said a few words which were not heard in the Reporters' Gallery.

LORD HAMMOND said, if Persia were allowed to possess Herat, the engagements into which Russia had entered with England not to interfere in Afghanistan would no longer avail to prevent her interfering with Herat, for it would then be no longer Afghan territory. Moreover, Herat having become part of Persia, Russia would have a right, under the 10th Article of the Treaty of Turkomanchai of February 21, 1828, to appoint a Cousul or commercial Agent to reside there, with a suite not exceeding 10 persons; and to the exercise of that right England could raise no objection, for we had claimed a similar right of Consular appointments, and exercised it, under the "most favoured nation"—the 9th—clause of our Treaty with Persia, of March 4, 1857. Under our previous Treaty of 1814, we could only have a Consul General at Tabreez, a Consul at Teheran, and an Agent at Bushire. But by our Treaty of 1857, we were enabled to claim the same privileges in regard to Consular appointments that Russia had secured by the Treaty of Turkomanchai, and asserted it by the appointment in 1858 of a Consul at Resht. It appears from the Blue Book respecting Persia issued some years ago that Colonel Sheil, in a despatch dated May 4, 1852, pointedly called the attention of the then Secretary of State, Lord Malmesbury, to the fact that—

"Herat being annexed to Persia, Russia enjoys the right, from which England is excluded, of placing a Consul in that city."

Lord STRATHNAIRN said, the Opposition speakers exhibited remarkable reticence with respect to the designs of Russia, whose name they hardly mentioned. [The noble Lord was understood to review the historical relations of Russia with Afghanistan and Persia, with the view of showing what the designs of Russia were, and how persistently they were pursued.]

Lord NAPIER of MAGDALA: My Lords, it is not my intention to enter again on the question as to who was the cause of Shere Ali's estrangement; but I was well acquainted with all the official Correspondence on the subject at the time, and I am quite satisfied that we had a sufficient and legitimate cause for going to war with the Ameer. When he received a Russian Ambassador, refused to admit our Embassy, and in other ways evinced hostility, it was quite time to bring him to reason. [*Ministerial Cheers.*] He had raised a large Force of Regular troops, had constructed fortifications, and collected large stores of war materials. Had we remained quiescent, the Russian Embassy would soon have been followed by Russian officers, and a formidable Force might have been created, which would have been a serious danger to our North-West Frontier in case of our being occupied in any other quarter. I have read an account of a gallant officer in South Africa, who was sent to hold a Pass, and to arrest a certain fugitive Chief. He was strictly ordered not to fire first. Accordingly, he occupied the Pass, and, faithful to his instructions, permitted the enemy to climb the hills on either side, and to take up every position of advantage behind rocks and trees; and, when they could cover the officer and his party, opened fire, and drove them out with the loss of half their number. The position of that officer's party was similar to that which some would have made us hold in India; but the Government of India would not accept it, attacked the danger in good time, and put an end to it. Regarding the Treaty of Gandamak, I must say that I would have carried the Frontier a great deal farther had I had the direction of it; but I gave the Government credit for extreme moderation, and an earnest desire to establish a friendly Ruler in Afghanistan. With regard to the attacks of fanatics, the same thing occurred on our first occupation of the Punjaub; some even broke into the barracks, and killed a few European soldiers before they were themselves destroyed. The same apprehensions of perpetual hostility were then entertained; but matters soon quieted down. There is nothing to cause apprehension of our position in Afghanistan. Cabul is quiet at present, and furnishing plentiful supplies. General Bright is received peaceably in the Lughman Valley, and Candahar is governed by General Stewart to the satisfaction of the people. I trust Her Majesty's Government will not withdraw from Afghanistan until perfect tranquillity has been restored, and until they can be assured of a Ruler who will be a safe and friendly neighbour.

The Marquess of RIPON said, he did not rise to make any reply to the observations of the noble and gallant Officer who had just addressed their Lordships (Lord Napier of Magdala); but as some of his remarks had been cheered by noble Lords opposite, he should await with some curiosity the reply which would be made by Her Majesty's Government to the very wide statements of policy which the noble and gallant Lord's speech had disclosed. There were two omissions in the speech of the noble Viscount opposite (Viscount Cranbrook). He did not give any description of the success which had attended the policy of the Government, and he also abstained from giving any indication of the policy which the Government now intended to pursue. He (the Marquess of Ripon) knew very well when they endeavoured to show that, up to the present time, the Government policy had been unsuccessful, their Friends were in the habit of replying that they had had misfortunes, and the noble Earl the Prime Minister, on the opening night of the Session, had also advanced that plea; but it could not be said to afford the Government any excuse, for those misfortunes had all along been predicted by those who had most knowledge and experience in Indian affairs as the necessary result of their Afghan policy. For a long time they had had no distinct statement of what the policy of the Government was. No two Ministers described it alike. Ultimately, however, there were three points on which Her Majesty's Government were generally agreed as the bases of their policy. The first was to make Afghanistan a strong, independent, and friendly neighbour; the second was to acquire a "scientific Frontier;" and the third was to obtain the right—which was the fixed object of the noble Marquess whose absence they all regretted (the Marquess of Salisbury)—of keeping officers in the various towns and cities of Afghanistan. The Under Secretary of State for India (Mr. E. Stanhope) made a very jubilant speech in the House of Commons on the 14th of August last, in which he said, not that Her Majesty's Government desired, but that they had got, this strong, friendly, and independent Afghanistan. His words were—

> "The policy lately pursued had gained for this country a friendly, an independent, and a strong Afghanistan." — [3 *Hansard*, ccxlix. 1018.]

His (the Marquess of Ripon's) answer to that was that instead of those objects being obtained the policy of the Government had made Afghanistan weak with the weakness of anarchy; had made it hostile with all the hostility of a blood-feud burned into the people's hearts by the flames of their desolated villages, and had destroyed its independence by the overthrow of its government, the imprisonment of its Ruler, and the occupation of the country. In confirmation of this, he would quote as an authority Sir Henry Rawlinson, the "veiled prophet," who sat in the India Office, and sent forth his prophecies to the world in *The Nineteenth Century*, to be followed afterwards by the acts of Her Majesty's Government, and who had said, on that point, that the disintegration of Afghanistan had scattered to the winds the prospect so long entertained of a strong, friendly, and independent Power on our North-West Frontier. The noble Viscount (Viscount Cranbrook) had said that evening that he was not so sure that a united Afghanistan now was of any use; and he put forward the novel doctrine that it would be better it should be broken up into a number of independent Chieftainships. As to the "scientific Frontier," the noble Earl at the head of the Government had said, even before the Treaty of Gandamak was signed, that that Frontier was obtained, and had described it as invulnerable. But if the Government had got an invulnerable Frontier, why could they not rest behind it and be satisfied? Scarcely, however, had the words of the noble Earl, in which, on the first night of the Session, he repudiated annexation, reached their ears, when they were informed by *The Times* that the Government were engaged in negotiations with Persia which seemed to point to an entire reversal of the policy of the last 50 years, and which involved schemes relating to places far beyond the "scientific Frontier." Who were the military authorities who considered the Frontier invulnerable? He listened with the greatest interest to hear what the noble and gallant Lord who spoke from the Cross-Benches (Lord Napier of Magdala) would say, and he observed that the noble and gallant Lord carefully abstained from saying either that he approved the Frontier, or thought it invulnerable. Military men, like General Hamley, speaking from a purely scientific point of view, had condemned the Frontier, and said something quite different ought to have been taken; and even Sir Henry Rawlinson now told us, in *The Nineteenth Century*, that it was necessary to occupy both Candahar and Cabul. Thus the "scientific Frontier" still required to be supplemented by successive aggressions upon Afghanistan. Lord Lawrence, that great and illustrious statesman whose loss all England now deplored, had told them, from his experience, that if they sent an Envoy to Cabul he would be kept in ignorance of all that was going on, and would probably be murdered. The Blue Book that had been laid on the Table showed that the gallant Sir Louis Cavagnari was ignorant of the danger up to the last hour, and was, unfortunately, sacrificed to the policy of Her Majesty's Government. One thing he hoped would be the result of our late experience—that the Government would not send gallant men to occupy such posts with inadequate escorts. If the Government wanted to send them, they must send them with Armies. He thought, from all that had happened, he was justified in saying that the policy of Her Majesty's Government had completely broken down; and, if so, he would ask what they were seeking now? The noble Viscount said that there had been no concealment on the part of the Government in these transactions. But if their Lordships carried back their memories to 1877 they would find that Her Majesty's Government resorted to every device to evade and to stifle inquiry. Even during the last year, when the war had broken out, and when the transactions of 1877 had been brought to light, the Government had still been as chary as possible of declarations of policy, and not till after the Treaty of Gandamak had any clear declaration been made. How did matters stand now? His noble Friend the late Governor General of India (the Earl of Northbrook) had expressed his satisfaction on hearing the Prime Minister on the first night of the Session say that the policy of the Government was opposed to annexation; but the statement they had just heard from the noble Viscount the Secretary of State for India was not so explicit, and he (the Marquess of Ripon), therefore, trusted that before the debate closed they would hear plainly from the Government what were the objects that they still desired to obtain in Afghanistan. He was well aware of the difficulties by which the Government were beset, and the complications in which they were involved; but he believed that they would best overcome those difficulties and escape from those complications if they spoke plainly and clearly as to their intentions. He was convinced it would be to the advantage of the Government to declare their policy, and that to do so would be in accordance with constitutional usage. By such candour they might obtain from Parliament, not a blind confidence, but a confidence intelligent and reasoned. The greatest needs of India were tranquillity and economy. The first duty of her Government was to husband her finances, and to promote the simplest elements of the well-being of her people. The condition of the country afforded small scope for showy schemes or feats of high policy. The pressing work to be done was hard, dreary, and unostentatious. But it was vital; and it ought to be the great aim alike of the Government and of Parliament to bring to an end these unhappy complications beyond our Frontier, in order that the whole strength and thought of the Indian Government might be devoted to their true task.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, the state of your Lordships' Benches appears to me to indicate something of unreality in this debate, and I am not surprised that such is the case. At an earlier period of the evening, when the House was much fuller than it is now, the debate introduced by the noble Duke opposite (the Duke of Argyll) took a scope which was more extended than either the period at which we have arrived or the Notice put on the Paper warranted. Just 15 months ago, there was in this House one of the most interesting and lengthened debates we have had for some years. It was commenced by Lord Halifax. During the present debate I watched the course taken by the noble Duke. He commenced at the usual hour of Business, and by the time the clock indicated the hour of 7 he had, in one continuous stream, gone over the whole ground —the history of the old Treaties with Afghanistan, of the Umballa Conferences, the Conference of 1873, the Conference with Sir Lewis Pelly, and the question whether we were or were not at liberty to propose to send a Resident into Afghanistan. He quoted citation after citation, what was said and what was written on that subject; but every one, I believe, of the quotations which the noble Duke used to-night were used in the debate 15 months ago. They were advanced by those who agreed with him, and answered by those who differed from him. The debate was kept up with great vigour. The noble Earl, lately Governor General of India, stated, with the greatest detail, his views on every point raised. I was allowed to reply to those noble Lords, who then advanced the arguments which the noble Duke has advanced to-night. I do not doubt that I did not convince those who differed from me, any more than did their arguments convince me. What I do know is that at the termination of the debate there was a majority against the views of the noble Duke, larger than any majority that I remember in modern years on any great public question. Over 200 voted against the views of the noble Duke, and something more than 60 for them. A debate also on the same question took place in the other House, and there a verdict was given against his views by a majority nearly double that by which the House of Commons usually supports the Government. The noble Duke addresses us with an energy and eloquence which we all admire. He was deficient to-night in neither the one nor the other quality; yet he must have felt for once that his arguments fell flat on the ears of his audience, because the House was conscious that these questions had been settled months and years ago. No doubt, he has suffered the disadvantage of not being present on the occasion to which I have referred. At that time, I believe, he was in hopeless correspondence with the newspapers. The noble Duke afterwards published two volumes, which enter into the same question. But that is not all. Returning to this country, he re-opened the question on a Motion for Papers, in the spring or summer of last year; and on that occasion he stated in full detail the views he has advanced to-night. This, therefore, is absolutely the fourth time when the views he takes have been more or less elaborately brought before your Lordships' attention. With regard to the debate of 1878, and, indeed, every debate, I may make one observation. It is always an advantage, after a conflict has arisen of opinion and argument, to ascertain, if you can, whether there are any great and cardinal points upon which this conflict shows there is identity or similarity of opinion between the two contending Parties. The result of what occurred in the debate of 1878, I think, showed that there were two points upon which, on both sides of the House, there was, in the main, great similarity of opinion. Both these points have been referred to to-night, and Lord Lawrence expressed his opinion upon them in the course of the debate of 1878. He is one of those who have been accused of inactivity. Now, I never thought that was a just statement with regard to Lord Lawrence. Indeed, I have never heard any person express more strongly than he did the opinion that it was vital to our interests in India to protect Afghanistan from foreign influence and from foreign encroachment. But the question was as to the way in which that should be done; and it was there, and only there, that he differed from those who supported the views of Her Majesty's Government. What was Lord Lawrence's opinion on that subject? He repeated in this House the opinion he had expressed some years before. He had said before that we should endeavour to come to some mutual arrangement with Russia with respect to Afghanistan; but failing such an arrangement, we should give Russia to understand that an advance towards India would "entail on her war in all parts of the world with England." That was Lord Lawrence's opinion, and he repeated it in this House in debate. He admitted the correctness of a quotation from one of his letters, to the effect that if Russia got possession of Afghanistan it would be the cause of trouble to us in India, and said he considered that we should do all in our power to avert that state of things, that we should come to an arrangement with Russia; but that if Russia would not enter into such an arrangement with us in regard to Afghanistan, or having done so should violate the understanding, then that "ulterior measures should be taken in England to protect India." Lord Lawrence was not against activity; but he wished that that activity should be in England. Now, we agree with Lord Lawrence in saying that Afghanistan should be protected from foreign influence and from foreign encroachment; but we thought the best way to protect Afghanistan was, not by threatening Russia with war in all parts of the world, but by strengthening our Frontiers in Afghanistan, and thereby giving us at once an influence over Afghanistan, and protection for ourselves, supposing our position was attacked. I maintain—and I believe I shall have the assent of an enormous majority in your Lordships' House when I affirm it—that, of the two policies, that of Lord Lawrence is the more dangerous, and that of the Government the safer. I mention this to show that on that point there was an agreement between the two sides of the House as to the end to be attained, and that the only difference was as to how it should be done. But there is another point on which an agreement, and that a remarkable one, is to be found. It turned out, in the course of the debate, that upon the point of having Residents in Afghanistan the only difference between the Government of India as it stood under the late Governor General and the Government of India as it now is, was a question of time and of circumstance. The noble Earl the late Governor General of India was of opinion that circumstances might occur which would justify us sending a Resident into Afghanistan, and giving her assurances of protection against encroachments from without. The Governor General and his Council were of opinion that if Russia advanced to Merv the time would have come when we must have a Resident at Herat. Well, then, is there not an end to this declamation about immorality and breach of faith on the part of our Government in proposing that there should be a Resident in Afghanistan, when the only question is as to the time the Resident should be sent? It was 7 o'clock before the noble Duke ended his retrospect on these questions, which were all argued and settled in 1878. At 7 o'clock he said he would now come to the subject of his Motion; and I must allow that, after an hour and three-quarters, it was nearly time. He said his object was to call attention to the consequences which had resulted from the policy of Her Majesty's Government; and I listened with great attention to hear what those consequences were. With regard to the consequences, there are three matters which, in my humble judgment, might be referred to. One was the Treaty of Gandamak. That is a consequence, no doubt, of the policy of Her Majesty's Government. Another matter was the sending of Sir Louis Cavagnari to Cabul, and his unfortunate fate there; while a third is the war which has since taken place, and the military occupation now going on. These are the consequences which have flowed from the policy of Her Majesty's Government; and what were the observations of the noble Duke about these? He never mentioned the Treaty of Gandamak. He did not criticize it or say it was open to censure, and other noble Lords who have spoken scarcely referred to it at all. Indeed, no speaker to-night has found fault with that Treaty, unless it were the noble Earl (the Earl of Northbrook), who did me the honour to turn his back upon me during his speech, so that I did not hear one word he said. The noble Marquess opposite (the Marquess of Ripon) said Sir Henry Rawlinson disagreed with the Treaty; but he did not say whether he agreed with Sir Henry Rawlinson in that respect. With regard to Sir Louis Cavagnari, I own I can hardly mention his name without emotion. I do not know whether your Lordships have all read the diary and narrative letters given by Sir Louis Cavagnari as to his residence at Cabul. I confess I never read anything which touched me more, having regard to what was his fate. They were written in the words, simple and unaffected, of an English gentleman and soldier, who went about without nervousness, excitement, or ostentation, simply doing the business he was sent to do, and endeavouring to bring about the best result he could. That is a happy country which produces such sons, and that country is to be pitied which loses such a son. Our sending an Envoy to Cabul, and not to one of the other places originally intended by the Government, was the work of the Ameer himself. He said—"I should prefer his being at Cabul, because he will be with me and under my protection." I do not agree with those who think the escort was too small. It would have been most unwise to have made it stronger, for the Ameer himself declared that a small escort would give to the Envoy greater safety than would a larger following. This was certainly the case as far as Sir Louis Cavagnari was concerned. It was thought to be the best arrangement that could be made, and I cannot speak without great pain of the circumstances which followed, particularly as far as the Bala Hissar was concerned. It was said that the presence of the Envoy was much disliked by the people of Cabul. I will not say that in the evidence published in the Blue Book there may not be expressions implying that there might be such a feeling; but a perusal of the whole evidence leaves on my mind the impression that there was no unfriendliness on the part of the people, but rather the reverse, as they believed the presence of the Envoy would do them good, and lead to some improvements in the Government. It was not difficult to understand how this melancholy occurrence arose; but it certainly was one which could scarcely be anticipated. It appears that the Ameer, with a licence of speech which men very much in want of money not unfrequently employ, told the troops, who were clamouring for arrears of pay, that they should have the money when the Envoy arrived on the 19th of May, and he repeated it more than once. The regiments did not get paid, and they were very angry, when, unfortunately, one of the officials told them to go to Sir Louis Cavagnari. Then followed the unfortunate occurrence; but it did not, in any way, put a different complexion upon the policy of the Government. What would the noble Lord have done? The Government of this country having met with this outrage at Cabul, would they have sat down quietly and not avenged it? I do not think so. What, then, are the consequences and the results of the policy of the Government to which he refers? I was surprised that he contented himself with moving for Papers, instead of putting on record a Resolution which would have been a definite statement of his opinions. It is not the part of a statesman to content himself with moving for Papers; and I think the noble Duke would have found great difficulty in stating what are the consequences of which he complains. The noble Marquess who has just sat down (the Marquess of Ripon) stated that the Government were bound to explain what their policy was. Well, on the first night of the Session the noble Earl who sits beside him (Earl Granville) asked my noble Friend the Prime Minister that question, and my noble Friend stated as clearly as he possibly could that it was impossible to state in the midst of a military occupation like that of Afghanistan what form a settlement would take. The noble Marquess must be well aware that, in such circumstances, it would be equally impossible for any Government to go beyond the statement which was made by my noble Friend. The noble Marquess also said—and it is the only part of his speech of which I complain—that in 1877 Her Majesty's Government resorted to every device to evade a discovery of the policy they meant to pursue. These were very strong words. I think, my Lords, they are hardly words which we are accustomed to hear used with respect to the proceedings and the policy of those who are opposed to us in politics. I know that a similar charge was made by the noble Marquess with respect to two answers made in this House by a noble Marquess, who is, unfortunately, not present to-night. The charge was made more than once in the presence of my noble Friend, and he has more than once answered it; and I, on his behalf and on behalf of the Government, repudiate, and repudiate with some indignation, the statement that the Government have ever resorted to a device to evade a discovery of what their policy really was. Your Lordships will, I think, agree with me that it is scarcely fair to repeat a charge which has been more than once made and more than once repelled. I again have to express my regret that a debate which raises questions of the highest importance was not founded upon a Motion which would have tested, in a more definite and distinct manner, the opinion of your Lordships' House; but it has not been, and I believe the reason it has not been is to be found in the fact that it would be impossible with any hope of success to introduce such a Motion.

EARL GRANVILLE: The noble and learned Earl who has just sat down (Earl Cairns) stated that there was a certain amount of unreality in the debate of this evening. I have very great doubts, my Lords, whether, if that is so, the fault is attributable to this side of the House. The noble Viscount opposite (Viscount Cranbrook) condemned the speech of my noble Friend (the Duke of Argyll), and said that there was so much of declamation in it that he did not think it worth while answering it. I am not sure that it is according to the self-interest of the noble Viscount to object to declamation; but the noble and learned Earl on the Woolsack took a different view, for he said that the speech of my noble Friend was one of great ability, though he complained of its length and the great scope it took. I venture to say that any of your Lordships who heard it, and those who read it to-morrow, will say that the speech of the noble Duke was singularly void of declamation, and that it was full of the most interesting matter, that it was closely argued, and gave its authorities, chapter and verse, as it went along from the Papers laid by Her Majesty's Government before Parliament. The noble and learned Earl complains that my noble Friend began with early matter, and spoke of large majorities in this House. Well, entirely putting aside the question whether in politics there is any such thing as a *res judicata*, I venture to suggest that events have since occurred which are calculated to modify the opinions of the majorities of which the noble and learned Earl spoke, and which, no doubt, Her Majesty's Government obtained on those occasions. But, be this as it may, is it the noble Duke who is to blame in this matter? Minister after Minister during this great speaking autumn have introduced things from the beginning, and made statements to prejudice the policy of their Predecessors and to defend themselves. The noble Viscount avoided answering the serious charges which were based upon his own celebrated despatch, and of having committed a most flagrant breach as regarded the Treaty by which we were bound to Shere Ali. He spoke—and, in doing so, I was still more surprised to find that he was followed by the noble and learned Earl—of that as a thing of indifference, and he quoted Treaties to show that parties to Treaties mutually agreed to modify those Treaties. But, my Lords, is that in the slightest degree a defence to the charge, that one of the most powerful nations on the earth, dealing with a weak neighbour, used threats of the strongest kind to force him to agree to a change which he was most anxious to repudiate? The noble Viscount could not give an answer as to the pledges given by Viceroys on the subject. Those pledges were undoubted. The noble Duke admitted the commentaries of Lord Canning, which were strongly confirmatory of the statements of the noble Duke. I think I can say, without fear of contradiction, that no Viceroy up to the time of Lord Lytton thought it a desirable thing that an Envoy should be sent to Cabul without the cordial assent and concurrence of the Ameer. Lord Canning was one of those who went further, for he thought that even with such cordial assent and concurrence it would be a most unwise and impolitic measure for the Indian Government to adopt. Nobody believes more in the entire honour of the noble Viscount than I do; but I must say I did hear with astonishment, after the discussion which has taken place and the passages quoted from the Blue Book, the statement which he made, that, in his opinion, the despatch did give a fair account of the circumstances, and that he still adhered to every word of it. At any rate, he did not take pains to answer what the noble Duke had said; but then the noble Viscount fell back on trying to make the late Government to blame, and he gave an account of what passed between the Home Government and the noble Earl (the Earl of Northbrook). He had already heard from the noble Earl his version of the matter; he ought to know that his own Viceroy gave the same version of it; and I hardly think it was worth his while to repeat a statement so entirely disproved. Then the noble Viscount has rather denied that any threatening language was used towards the Ameer. I cannot conceive how there can be any doubt that the language of Lord Lytton was most threatening; and I well remember how it was commented on as such at the time. Some time ago I pointed out the extraordinary speech addressed to the Envoy, who was charged to repeat it to the Ameer. It was full of threats from beginning to end, and not only were these threats made, but they were carried out by the rupture of diplomatic relations. The noble and learned Earl objected very much to the noble Duke going into all this matter, and then he made an extraordinary charge against the Opposition speakers that they did not say a word about the Gandamak Treaty. The noble Earl (the Earl of Northbrook) addressed himself largely to that subject, and when he informed the noble and learned Earl of the fact, the latter said—"I could not hear him; he turned his back on me." That is a position, I fear, we frequently take with regard to the noble and learned Earl, not out of any want of respect to him, but for certain private reasons of our own. But at one period of my noble Friend's speech the noble and learned Earl was reclining after dinner in another part of the House, and the noble Viscount opposite left the House while my noble Friend was addressing it. The noble Viscount boasted that, not having time, he had never read the book about Afghanistan by the noble Duke (the Duke of Argyll). I can assure him it is not a formidable work. It is in large type, and there is only half a volume upon Afghanistan. I dare say if the noble Viscount and his Friends read it they would not like it; and they would find in it much with which they could not agree; but I cannot help thinking that there is matter in that book which even the Secretary of State for India might make himself master of with advantage. But, passing that by, I must say, when a person like my noble Friend (the Earl of Northbrook), speaking on recent knowledge possessed on the subject of India, addresses a thoughtful speech to your Lordships, it would be worth while for the Secretary of State for India to condescend to hear what he had got to say. One of the great complaints against Her Majesty's Government is that they have disregarded the advice which they might have got. My noble Friend has had much to say upon the subject of the Treaty of Gandamak, and he has thrown great doubt upon the "scientific Frontier." Allusion has been made to the different versions of the objects of the war; and though I am aware that the noble Earl at the head of the Government has denied that he said that the object was to obtain a "scientific Frontier," he, in a subsequent speech to that denial, boasted that this object of their policy had been achieved. Then, the noble Viscount has said that Her Majesty's Government mean to pursue their policy to the end; but I confess, notwithstanding what we have heard from him and the noble and learned Earl opposite, I do not yet know what that policy is, though that may be very stupid on my part. What makes it difficult to arrive at this knowledge is that the Members of the Government contradict each other every month. The noble Viscount congratulated the House on having successfully broken Afghanistan into small parts.

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK: That is not quite what I said. I thought it was a very arguable question as to whether it would not be better to have Afghanistan divided, than as a whole.

EARL GRANVILLE: I thought the noble Viscount decided in favour of a divided Afghanistan. However that may be, subsequent to the most unfortunate murder of that gallant hero, Sir Louis Cavagnari, two Ministers—I think three—had declared that it was still their object to have a strong, friendly, independent Afghanistan. How they are to have that with Afghanistan broken into pieces I do not know. They began by weakening Yakoob Khan's position by demanding territorial concessions from him. Another point which my noble Friend raised was the sending of an Afghan Governor, with money and with Native levies, to Afghan Turkestan; and I certainly should like to hear some explanation of the wisdom of that policy which the noble and learned Earl has defended—the sending of Cavagnari with so small an escort that it was impossible that it could defend itself and protect him. The noble and learned Earl said the attack could not have been anticipated. He gave an ingenious description of how things might have been, which your Lordships could not give an opinion upon; but the event which happened was always declared to be a certainty by Dost Mahomed, by Shere Ali, by Lord Lawrence, and by every experienced Anglo-Indian; and I am surprised that the noble and learned Earl should assert that it could not have been anticipated. The noble and learned Earl, as he always does, took exception to the terms of the Motion. I have never known any formal Motion by the Opposition which has not met with severe criticism as to its form. The noble Duke calls attention to the consequences which have resulted from the policy of the Government. Do your Lordships realize what the consequences have been? Can you look at it from all points—at the murders, at the military engagements, at the entire anarchy which prevails, at the hatred you have excited in the population—and not see and reflect upon those consequences? And here I note another Ministerial contradiction. The First Lord of the Treasury told us, a few days ago, it was a mistake to suppose that we had excited the hatred of the population; but the Secretary of State for India to-night candidly admits the truth of that charge. The Government admit that the difficulties of the position are enormous; and those difficulties are certainly the consequences of the policy they have adopted. The noble and learned Earl objected to the Motion for Papers. The noble Duke stated that if they were refused on the ground of the public advantage he would not press for them; and if he had done so after such a statement it would have been impossible for me to have supported him, for I would never press such a Motion after the Government had made that assertion. On the other hand, we must be allowed to make our own conjectures as to the reason. I have exhausted to myself the different reasons which the Government can have. One reason might be that the Papers would not bear out the charges made against the late Government. I can hardly think they would have been deterred from presenting Papers because they would have been fatal to the arguments we have advanced. The reason suggested by the noble Duke is probable and reasonable, and is that the Government do not wish to excite needless irritation in Russia, or, it may be, in this country against Russia. I am not, however, quite sure that that reason is consistent with the language held by Members of the Government and their supporters, notably in a speech delivered at

Manchester by the noble Marquess who is absent, and the language of which was not calculated to produce a favourable effect in Russia. No doubt, it is statesmanlike in international affairs not to excite irritation. Yet I do not understand this position from the Papers they have produced. In the Central Asian Papers there is a letter which appears to me not to be likely to suit Russia. It speaks of the Afghans showing us the cold shoulder, under the erroneous supposition that we have been using the influence of the Sultan to keep the Afghans on our side. It says that Russia made promises to succour the Ameer which she did not carry out, and that Russia urged the Ameer to proceed in a course of deceit and deception towards us. I cannot help thinking some of us, two years ago, might have said—"How un-English! How Russian!" I am afraid we are now debarred from saying it, when we have cynically published to the whole world that we gave instructions to our own Viceroy to act with deceit towards the Ameer. My noble Friend (the Earl of Northbrook), who was, unfortunately, listened to only by one Cabinet Minister, gave his opinion with regard to the method of dealing with the present state of things in a singularly calm and moderate tone. He suggested the course he thought Her Majesty's Government might adopt. I do not expect—indeed, it is not to be expected—the Government would follow the advice of a political rival, although it would have been well if they had formerly paid attention to the advice of persons in that position. But they will remember that my noble Friend expresses not only his own opinions, but also the opinions of others, some of the most experienced in Indian affairs both in India and in this country. I would further remind them that if they will follow the general tenor of that advice it will be absolutely consistent with principles which, since the present Administration was formed, were laid down by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and also by the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury), who, in writing instructions to the Viceroy with regard to the temporary occupation of Quetta, told him he must be well aware that the Government authorized no question of territorial conquest on the North-West Frontier, and no advance of that sort would have any advantage which would not be counteracted by the enormous political and financial difficulties which would attend any advance from our Frontier at that time. The noble and learned Earl on the Woolsack appealed to us to say whether, after the murder of Cavagnari, we could have abstained from doing anything? I say, No. Being placed in the difficulty which you created, and one having those fatal consequences, it was necessary we should take some steps. Whether we were wise in taking them, not to leave the country as soon as possible before fresh complications arose, is, to use the noble Viscount's phrase, a most arguable question. But I do think Her Majesty's Government should give a little more earnest than has already been given that their policy is to withdraw from Afghanistan, not as soon as it is perfectly tranquillized—to use the phrase of the noble and gallant Baron, a state of things for which we may have to wait for some centuries—but as soon as we have put down the large masses of troops now in hostile array against us. It would really be very satisfactory to the country if Her Majesty's Government would give some more definite information of their policy on this subject.

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD: My Lords, I agree with the noble Earl (Earl Granville) that we should be scrupulous always in treating affairs of State, and especially Parliamentary affairs, as *res judicatæ*. It was quite open to the noble Duke opposite (the Duke of Argyll), if he thought this House had arrived at an unsound conclusion on a matter of paramount importance a year ago, to again ask the opinion of your Lordships on the merits of the case. But that is exactly what the noble Duke does not do. Admitting that in a House of Parliament a *res judicata* must not be too freely accepted, we have a right to expect that those who urge that plea should again ask the opinion of the House on the merits of the case; whereas the noble Duke has not even brought forward a Resolution which can in any way be interpreted as one challenging the opinion of your Lordships' House. The noble Duke has studied the subject, and in stating it, has dealt in much detail, and, in addition to his talents and ardent eloquence, he has the immense advantage of having written a book—and a most able work it is—on the subject. That work unfortunately appeared at a moment when it did not necessarily, from the state of affairs then existing, command that attention from the public which it might otherwise have done. I believe it may have been that unfortunate Treaty of Gandamak which satisfied the country; and your Lordships did not, therefore, pay that attention to the noble Duke's work which it deserved, and the merits of which your Lordships have become familiar with in this House. We have all read of, and some of us have probably suffered from, the *Spretæ injuria formæ;* but, my Lords, the *Spreti injuria libri* may be a grievance not less stimulating, and may lead to interminable debates. Certainly it is a remarkable circumstance that in the present state of this country and of this question, the noble Duke and noble Lords opposite holding such extreme opinions upon it, not mitigated or modified by any doubt whatever, but convinced that the Government of the country are following a policy of a most pernicious character, dangerous to the State, and, it may be, fatal to the Empire; yet we never hear of their serious objections, except in a form which evades challenging the opinion of the House, and does not give that guidance to the country which one would suppose statesmen influenced by such strong convictions would seek the opportunity of disseminating. My Lords, the noble Duke has spoken from a mind which is trained upon this subject. It is, therefore, difficult to meet one whose speech is a mass of details, who has every extract written and ticketed, and who can at all times refer to the most minute circumstances. The noble Duke threw the decalogue at the head of my noble Friend the Governor General of India (Lord Lytton), and described some important document—I hope not the Queen's Speech—as "twaddle." But one must ask—What is the real question at issue? That is what the country is looking to. The real question cannot be decided by this criticism of telegrams. It is a clear conception of what really is at issue that alone ought to guide us in this matter. Well, my Lords, you know that some three years ago or more—most unexpectedly and most undesired by those who were advising the Crown—what is called the Eastern Question revived. It is unnecessary to recall to your Lordships' recollection all the incidents of that period. It is well known there was a moment when the relations between Russia and Great Britain were of the most delicate character; when, indeed, there were those, certainly in Russia, who looked on war not only as impending, but as inevitable. Well, in these circumstances, Russia naturally—and I do not blame her—looked to a point where she thought she might embarrass the power of England, and weaken the influence and authority which England was exercising. She looked to Central Asia—the influence of Central Asia on India—to effect that great object. Well, we had to consider what course we ought to pursue in these circumstances. The question of the North-Western Frontier of India was no new question. It has not grown up in these few years, as one would suppose from some speeches in this House. It is one which has long occupied the attention and consideration of all Indian statesmen, and, I think I may also add, of all those statesmen in England who aspire at all to the responsibility of the conduct of our affairs. In this state of things we had to decide what was the best step to counteract the efforts Russia was then making; for though war had not been declared, her movements had commenced in Central Asia, and the struggle had commenced which was to decide for ever which Power should possess the great gates of India. One would imagine, listening to the noble Duke—at least a stranger might—for we are accustomed to his expositions, but a stranger charmed by his eloquence, carried away by the fervour of his phrase, and overwhelmed with the multiplicity of his details—a stranger might listen to him to-night and never form the slightest idea that the real question at issue was whether England should possess the gates of her own great Empire in India, and whether the time had not arrived when we could no longer delay that the problem should be solved, and in a manner as it has been solved by Her Majesty's Government. Then, the noble Earl who spoke last (Earl Granville), and others who preceded him, appealed to me for a definition of the policy of the Government in this matter. One would think that the Government had never expressed an opinion on the subject. If there be a public question upon which the Government has expressed an opinion more distinct or definite than upon the North-Western Frontier of our Indian Empire, I am at a loss to know what it is. Why, the noble Earl himself said, the first day of the Session, that I had given a description of our policy which, to the candid minds of noble Lords opposite, seemed then quite satisfactory. How long is it since the first day of the Session? The first day of the Session was in this month; and here, before February is passed, I am indicted and inveighed against and condemned because I have not given another description of the policy of Her Majesty's Government. From our declared policy we have not swerved for a moment. We resolved that the time had come when this country should acquire the complete command and possession of the gates of our Indian Empire. Having come to that resolution, we took the most effective steps to accomplish our purpose. That purpose was accomplished and achieved with complete success. We obtained the gates of our Indian Empire; they are in our possession now; and I trust the hour will never arrive when they will not be in the possession of this country. Why, as my noble and learned Friend on the Woolsack reminded the House, all the objections and all the suggestions on this subject made by the noble Earl opposite and his Friends are but mere accidents of the vast question which is really at stake. Nothing which has occurred—though many things have occurred which we did not contemplate, and which we deplore—nothing has occurred which would for a moment induce us to modify our policy. Nothing has occurred which would induce us in any way to change our policy. Nor has anything happened—though much has happened, I admit, that one remembers with deep regret and heartfelt pain—nothing has happened which, so far as our conduct and policy are concerned, ought in the slightest degree to influence us. The noble Earl in his speech referred to the unfortunate, the terribly unfortunate, death of Cavagnari and his gallant companions. Well, if we could have contemplated that such an incident could have occurred, could we for a moment have admitted that that possible occurrence was an argument against the accomplishment of that policy, which we deemed of first-rate importance, and which your Lordships also agreed and the country decided to be of first-rate importance? What has happened, I want to know, which should induce us in any way to deviate from a policy so distinct as that which we always urged, and which, on the first day of the Session, even received the approbation of the noble Earl opposite and his Friends? My Lords, I am quite at a loss to follow the arguments which the noble Earl has urged against our general policy. It appears to me that, from the very first, we have acted with entire consistency in this affair—a consistency which could only arise from a clear conception of the object we had to accomplish. That object has been accomplished. Then the noble Marquess who preceded the noble Earl (the Marquess of Ripon) addressed Her Majesty's Government in a tone of condescending commiseration. He said—"We are perfectly aware of the difficulties you have to encounter and the infinite complications in which you are involved." No doubt there are difficulties which must attend the attainment of all great ends. Beyond them, we know of no other; and as for the complications, what complications do you mean? We have attained our object. We are in military command of the country; we have most of its strong places in our possession. "But," says the noble Earl, "if you have attained your object, why not leave the country?" I differ, however, from the noble Earl. We cannot leave the country now, because it would, indeed, be a stain upon our honour if we left the country in a state of turbulence and confusion. But that state of turbulence and confusion does not originate from our general policy or from the accomplishment of the great ends we have achieved. It has originated from circumstances which no human foresight could guard against, and the consequences must be met by temper and decision, but certainly not by withdrawing. This is not a moment in which England in that part of the world should show diminished determination. Although your Lordships, unfortunately, have no opportunity of expressing your opinion on this occasion, I think we have a right to conclude that the feeling and the convictions of your Lordships' House upon this subject are the same as when, more than a year ago, you recorded your verdict by an overwhelming majority. I am ready to admit that a change of circumstances may also induce a change of opinion, and you ought to enjoy the privilege of recording it afresh in the most complete degree, and with the utmost conviction. But until there is evidence of a change of opinion in this House much stronger than we have yet witnessed, let me at least believe that the Peers of England are still determined to uphold, not only the Empire, but the honour of the country. Let me believe that they will not sanction our withdrawal from Afghanistan, because we have accomplished our particular purpose, leaving the population of that country in a state of comparative anarchy, according to the description given by the noble Earl and his Friends; but I do not join in these descriptions of Afghanistan. I believe there are considerable portions of Afghanistan in a state of absolute peace and great prosperity. The district of Candahar alone is one that might make noble Lords hesitate before they accept these opinions so rashly enunciated as to the disorganized state of the country. It is—I will not say a corner—but a remote district of the country, and a crowd of turbulent and unpaid soldiery, that have brought about these great misfortunes; but, my Lords, you must not be distracted from the pursuance of a great national policy by accidents of this kind and temporary circumstances, which you may rest assured will disappear. Be firm, be resolute, and be determined. Let men know that while you are ready to be just you are resolved to be obeyed, and all these difficulties and complications will disappear at once.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL said, he wished to make one remark in reply—that the doctrine of the inutility of valleys as military Frontiers, if the movements of the enemy on the other side were unknown, would ultimately lead to the adoption of the line of the Oxus as a scientific Frontier.

LORD NAPIER OF MAGDALA explained that the North-Western Frontier of India was not open to that objection.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

House adjourned at a quarter past Twelve o'clock, to Monday next, Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 20th February, 1880.

MINUTES.]—NEW WRITS ISSUED—*For* Kilkenny Borough, *v.* Benjamin Whitworth, esquire, Manor of Northstead; *for* Drogheda, *v.* William Hogarty O'Leary, esquire, deceased.

SELECT COMMITTEE—Turnpike Acts Continuance Act, 1879, *appointed* and *nominated;* Commons, *nominated.*

PUBLIC BILLS — *Select Committee* — Chartered Banks (Colonial) * [4], *nominated.*

Committee—Report—Relief of Distress (Ireland) [1-84].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS.

RESOLUTION.

MR. RAIKES said, that Bills for confirming Provisional Orders were essentially Private Bills which related entirely to the interests of particular localities, and ought to be referred to a Committee upstairs in the same way as Private Bills. The course now adopted with regard to them had been found highly inconvenient, particularly at the end of the Session, when these Bills were usually brought in in great numbers. They generally came on late at night, at the end of a long Sitting; and he could remember on one occasion having to write about 200 Amendments in a Bill at about 2 o'clock in the morning, at a time when the House was exceedingly impatient. He could not but think that the interests of the public would be quite as well served, if not better served, by those Bills being taken at the time other Private Bills were taken. He begged, therefore, to move the Resolution which he had placed upon the Paper, which would insure that all the Bills would go before the tribunal which was best qualified to form an opinion upon the subject.

Motion *agreed to.*

Ordered, That all Bills for confirming Provisional Orders or Certificates shall be set down for consideration, each day, in a separate List, after the Private Business, and arranged in the same order as that prescribed by the Standing Orders for Private Bills; and every such Bill, when or so far as it is unopposed, shall after the Second Reading stand referred to the Committee constituted by Standing Order for unopposed Private Bills, and shall be subject to the same Rules and Orders of the House, so far as they are applicable.—(*The Chairman of Ways and Means.*)

QUESTIONS.

MERCANTILE MARINE—FISHING VESSELS—LIGHTS OF, AT SEA.

Sir EDWARD WATKIN asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether he will undertake to defer putting into operation the regulations affecting the lights to be carried by fishing vessels at sea until the reports of the officers deputed to visit the various ports, in order to ascertain whether the regulations already proposed by the Board without any such inquiry are feasible or safe, are laid upon the Table of the House?

Viscount SANDON, in reply, said, the regulations respecting these lights were laid down by a Commission appointed by the Admiralty, the Trinity House, and the Board of Trade, acting in concert with the representatives of maritime States. International regulations could not be altered by the action of the Board of Trade alone. A small Commission had been appointed to consider the complaints which had been made. That Commission's Report he had received, and he would give to it his best consideration. The Report was now on the Table of the House. The international regulations would not come into force until the month of September.

WAR OFFICE REGULATION ACT, 1878.

Sir CHARLES W. DILKE asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether the junior clerks retired from the War Office under the Admiralty and War Office Regulation Act of 1878, will be retired on the same amount of pension as those of the same class and service retired from the Admiralty under the same Act?

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON: Sir, the actual amount of pension in every case depends upon the amount of salary of which an officer is in receipt at the time of his retirement, and differences in salary may give rise to differences in pension as between War Office and Admiralty clerks of similar class and service. But the proportion between pension and salary will be the same in every case dealt with under the Admiralty and War Office Regulation Act of 1878.

TURKEY—PROVINCIAL CONSTITUTIONS OF EUROPEAN TURKEY.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If he will lay upon the Table the Organic Statute under which the several Provincial Constitutions of European Turkey are being framed; whether Her Majesty's Government are satisfied that the Local Commissions appointed are constituted in a manner according with the spirit and intentions of the Treaty of Berlin; and, whether the Constitution framed by the Adrianople Commission will now be submitted to the European Commission in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty?

Mr. BOURKE: Sir, in reply to the first part of the Question, we should have no objection whatever to lay the Organic Statute before Parliament when we receive it; but we think, at the same time, it would convey very insufficient information to the House, as it is in an incomplete form. At present, it is being translated at Constantinople, and as it of great length it is not likely to reach this country for some time. If my hon. Friend will communicate with me some little time hence, I shall be glad to tell him then whether we shall be able to communicate it to the House. Of course, Her Majesty's Government will have no objection to communicate it as soon as possible. With regard to the second part of the Question—

> "Whether Her Majesty's Government are satisfied that the Local Commissions appointed are constituted in a manner according with the spirit and intentions of the Treaty of Berlin,"

I think I informed the House the other day that complaints had been made, both by Sir Henry Layard and by our Commissioners on the spot, with respect to the constitution of the Commissions at Adrianople and Salonica. In consequence of those complaints, made by the Commissioners themselves, a greater representation of the Christian element was placed on the Commission. We have no reason to think that the Commissions have been organized and formed in any way contrary to the spirit of the Treaty of Berlin. With reference to the last part of the Question—

> "Whether the Constitution framed by the Adrianople Commission will now be submitted to the European Commission in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty,"

I am not in a position to answer that at present, because, the question as to these constitutions being referred to a European Commission, it is not yet ripe for decision, for the Local Commissioners have not yet completed their labours.

REGULATION OF RAILWAYS ACT, 1871.

GENERAL SIR **GEORGE BALFOUR** asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether the Government contemplate taking powers to cause the Railway Companies to supply statistical data of their operations, so as to make known to the public, the actual cost of carriage of, the various classes of merchandise, of minerals, and several classes of passengers—as is done on the Indian lines and on the Railways of New South Wales; and also show the actual or average rates for the various classes of merchandise, of minerals, and fares for passengers — distinguishing those for local from through or competitive traffic; whether it is in contemplation to obtain for the Board of Trade such full power of supervision over the accounts of the Railway Companies as will ensure Railway accounts being presented to proprietors in a lucid and intelligible form; and, whether the Board of Trade will take powers to employ inspecting officers, to collect materials for a Return to Parliament of the actual state of all obsolete working stock appearing in the official Returns of the Railway Companies as "in good working order and repair?"

VISCOUNT **SANDON**: Sir, the forms of the Returns were carefully considered when the Regulation of Railways Act was passed in 1871, and nothing has occurred since that time to make us think it desirable to ask for powers to alter and extend those forms compulsorily. We have been in communication with the Clearing House in order to ascertain whether we can procure further information concerning the cost per mile of carrying goods and passengers, and I am in hopes that we shall obtain valuable information upon the subject. As far as I have been able to ascertain, it would be impracticable to obtain the actual or average rates; and I cannot think that if they could be obtained they would be of much use, as the rates are very various and very frequently altered. We are not prepared to ask for further powers of supervision, as the hon. and gallant Gentleman requests, over the accounts of Railway Companies, which were carefully settled by the Act of 1868; nor do I think it desirable that the Board of Trade should employ their inspecting officers to collect Returns as to the condition of the working stock of all the railways in the United Kingdom.

CUSTOMS RE-ORGANIZATION.

MR. **FRY** asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the reorganisation of the Clerical Department of the Customs at the out-ports will include the institution of clerkships of the lower division; and, if not, whether writers who have been recommended for promotion under the 12th Clause of the Order in Council of 12th February 1876 will receive promotion to clerkships of any special class which may be created?

SIR **HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON**: Sir, it is not certain whether clerkships of the lower division will be instituted in the Clerical Department of the Customs at the outports. If a special class is created instead, writers recommended for promotion under Clause 12 of the Order in Council of February 12, 1876, will have their claims considered in the same way as if there had been lower division clerkships.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURAL DISTRESS.

MR. **J. W. BARCLAY** asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, considering the great interest felt in the Country regarding the supplies of agricultural produce to be expected from America in coming years, and the anxiety of farmers to learn the conclusions of the Assistant Commissioners to the Royal Commission on Agricultural Distress, who visited that Country, the Government will arrange for the early publication of their Report?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, this is a question which does not rest with the Government, but with the Royal Commissioners. I have communicated with my noble Friend the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, who is the Chairman of the Commission; and he informs me that the Report which is expected from the Assistant Commissioners who visited the United States has not yet been received. I am sorry to say that one of our Friends has been ill since his return to England, and that has, no doubt, delayed the sending in of the Report. Until it is received, it is impossible to say anything definite as to its publication. The attention of the Royal Commission has, however, been drawn to the subject.

NAVY—THE ROYAL MARINES.

MR. ANDERSON asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, If it be the fact that a secret or private Committee is now sitting on various questions affecting the corps of Royal Marines, and if that Committee consists almost exclusively of persons connected with the Marine Office; and, if he will grant to the Marine officers a Commission of an independent character to consider their grievances, similar to that which was granted to Army officers in 1874?

MR. W. H. SMITH: Sir, it is the fact that a Committee, consisting of eight members, is sitting to consider various questions affecting the Royal Marines; but only two of these members are connected with the Marine Office. It is appointed to consider questions on which their judgment has been asked by the Board of Admiralty. The War Office Commission of 1874 was a Royal Commission appointed, consequent on the abolition of Purchase in the Army, for the special purpose of considering the best means for securing a reasonable rapidity of promotion, not differing essentially from that which obtained before the abolition of the Purchase system. That object was attained for the Marines by the Order in Council of January 15, 1878, which was founded on the Report of a Committee on precisely the same principles as those adopted by the Royal Commission on Army Promotion. I am not aware of any special circumstances which render it necessary at this moment to appoint another Commission.

TURKEY—MURDER OF MR. OGLE.

MR. H. SAMUELSON asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether the Consul General at Salonica has yet reported as to the practicability of holding a new inquiry into Mr. Ogle's murder; and, if not, whether Her Majesty's Government will take steps to obtain his report at the earliest possible moment?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, Mr. Blunt, the Consul General at Salonica, in his first reply by telegram to Sir Henry Layard, expressed an opinion unfavourable to the prospects of a further inquiry being made into the circumstances of the murder of Mr. Ogle, owing to the Province of Thessaly not being in its normal condition, and also because such an inquiry, in the present circumstances, would be likely to increase the agitation and excite the feelings prevalent in the frontier district. Mr. Blunt has been requested to furnish a detailed statement of his views, and of the grounds on which he has formed them. He has replied that he will do so as soon as he receives the Report he has asked for from Her Majesty's Vice Consuls at Larissa and Volo.

SUGAR BOUNTIES—NEGOTIATIONS WITH FOREIGN POWERS.

MR. HANBURY (for Mr. SAMPSON LLOYD) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether it is true that Her Majesty's Government are negotiating with the Governments of France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany (or with any of them) respecting the bounties on Sugar exported from such countries, notwithstanding that the Select Committee on Sugar Industry, which was appointed last Session, has not yet presented any Report; and, if such is the case, whether there will be any objection to lay the Correspondence on this subject before the House?

MR. BOURKE: Sir, Her Majesty's Government are not in negotiation with any foreign Power on the subject.

INDIA STOCK — POWERS OF ATTORNEY.

MR. FRESHFIELD asked the Under Secretary of State for India, If his attention has been drawn to a letter in the "Times" of the 12th of January, regarding powers of attorney granted by holders of India Five per Cent. Stock, for the receipt of dividends thereon; and, whether any steps are in contemplation to render such powers applicable to the Four per Cent. Stock offered by the Secretary of State in Council in exchange?

MR. E. STANHOPE: Sir, I am glad that my hon. Friend has put this Question, because it gives me the opportunity of informing the holders of Five per Cent Stock that this point has been considered, and that a Bill is now being prepared to render their powers of attorney applicable to the Four per Cent Stock offered in exchange. I hope shortly to introduce it.

THE NAVY ESTIMATES.

CAPTAIN PIM asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether his attention has been called to an article in the "United Service Gazette" of 14th February instant, in reference to a suggestion that—

> "A printed report of the state of the Navy should be placed in the hands of honourable Members at least a fortnight before the Navy Estimates were moved;"

whether he is aware that such a course is practised by the Secretary of the American Navy in reference to the American Congress; and, whether he will consider whether the time of this House might not be saved and the public service benefited by the adoption of a similar procedure?

MR. W. H. SMITH: Sir, the annual Report of the Secretary of the United States Navy is presented on the 30th of November in each year, and gives an account of the condition and operations of the Navy Department for the preceding fiscal year ending the 30th of June, and the Estimates for the current fiscal year commencing July 1. In the British House of Commons the Navy Estimates for the succeeding year are, as the hon. and gallant Member knows, usually explained to the House before the 31st of March, and placed in the hands of Members some time before that date; it would, consequently, not be possible to give any complete or accurate account of the conditions and operations of the Navy for the current year, previous to the time the Estimates are moved, and I do not think it would be desirable to do so.

SOUTH AFRICA—THE ZULU WAR—THE DESPATCHES.

SIR EDWARD WATKIN asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether the Report of General Crealock on the operations of the First Division on the south coast of Zululand will be laid upon the Table and printed in extenso?

COLONEL STANLEY: Yes, Sir; that Paper will, I believe, be laid on the Table with others. I had better, perhaps, explain that the War Office, and also, I believe, the Admiralty, forward all such Papers to the Colonial Office; and that Department is responsible for their production to Parliament. I have reason to believe the Paper in question will be produced.

PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. BIGGAR asked the Member for North Warwickshire, If he will consent to postpone his Motion to enable the Government to proceed with the Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill?

MR. NEWDEGATE: Sir, in reply to the hon. Member for Cavan, I beg to state that I gave Notice of this Resolution at the close of last Session, and that I renewed it on the first day of this Session. I trust that if the House adopts this Resolution it will facilitate the passing of many measures, including among others the Bill for the Relief of the Irish Distress. I cannot accede to the request of the hon Member.

ARMY—THE TROOPS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

SIR WALTER B. BARTTELOT asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether any answer has been received from Sir Garnet Wolseley with regard to the state of our troops in South Africa; and whether, if so, it will be laid on the Table of the House?

COLONEL STANLEY, in reply, said, that an answer had been received, and that if the hon. and gallant Baronet wished to move for its production there would be no objection to lay it on the Table of the House.

IRELAND — THE COMMISSIONERS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION — FEMALE EDUCATION IN GALWAY.

Mr. P. MARTIN asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, If it is the fact that in the Galway Model Schools, Girls' Department, the amount expended by the Commissioners of National Education in preparing each child for the result examinations is eleven pounds seven shillings, and that the per-centage of passes is forty-five, and of answering in obligatory subjects is seventy-six, and the number of teachers supplied to other schools, one; and that in the King's Inn Street Convent National Female Schools the amount of aid given by the Commissioners for the proportion of each child is in or about eleven shillings only, the per-centage of passes ninety-seven, and of answering in obligatory subjects ninety-six, and of teachers supplied to other schools twenty-two; and, whether, having regard to the great disparity in the amounts thus expended by the Commissioners in preparing each child, any steps have been taken or suggestions made by the Commissioners with the object of increasing the payment to schools which exhibit such favourable educational results as the King's Inn Street Schools; and, if not, can he state the reasons for the continuance by the Commissioners in their application of State funds in a manner so disproportionate to the work done?

Mr. J. LOWTHER: Sir, I fear it is impossible, within the limited space generally allowed to answers to Questions in this House, to go into details on this somewhat large topic; but from the information given me privately by the Commissioners of National Education, it appears that the hon. Gentleman has not been accurately informed. For instance, I am told that the cost of preparing each child for the result examinations at the Galway Model Schools, instead of being £11 7*s.*, is only £7 2*s.* 2*d.*, and that the percentage of passes is 75 instead of 45, and that of answering in obligatory subjects is 80 instead of 76. In the same way, I am informed that at the King's Inn Street School the amount of aid given for the proportion of each child by the Commissioners is not 11*s.*, but £1 3*s.* 3*d.* As to the last portion of the Question, communications have passed with the Commissioners; but I hope to be in a position to give the hon. Gentleman full information when the Estimates are brought on.

Mr. P. MARTIN: I should like to be informed what authority the right hon. Gentleman has for representing the facts as he has done?

Mr. J. LOWTHER: From no information, but from facts supplied to me.

Mr. P. MARTIN: Will the right hon. Gentleman lay a copy of the statement on the Table of the House?

Mr. J. LOWTHER: At present it is a private statement, and I do not know how far I might be justified in laying it on the Table.

IRISH POOR LAW UNIONS AND THE SEED SUPPLY BILL.

Major NOLAN asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, If the Local Government Board has published a schedule of those unions or electoral divisions which they intend to place under the provisions of the Seed Supply Bill should it become Law; if the unions have been informed of the extent of the powers which may be placed in their hands under this Bill; and on what date will it be safe for the Guardians of unions to enter into contracts for seed?

Mr. J. LOWTHER, in reply, said, that a Schedule of the Unions had been prepared. Some changes, due to alterations in the Bill, would have to be notified to the Guardians, and this would be done speedily. As the Bill was down for second reading in "another place," it was not for him at that moment to make any suggestions as to the action of the Board of Guardians; but he would be disposed to think that they would probably be inclined to take action now without further delay.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

PARLIAMENT—PRIVILEGE—MR. PLIMSOLL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Complaint made to the House [17th February].

Question again proposed,

"That the publication of printed placards throughout the City of Westminster, representing the part taken by Sir Charles Russell, the Member for the said City, in the proceedings of this House as 'inhuman' and 'degrading,' injuriously reflects upon the said Member, is an attempt to coerce and intimidate him in the discharge of his duties, and a breach of the Privileges of this House."—(*Sir Charles Russell.*)

Debate *resumed.*

Mr. PLIMSOLL: Mr. Speaker, I beg the indulgence of the House for a very short time on a personal matter, and to put myself in Order I will conclude with a Motion. Though I must allude to certain matters relating to the question of Privilege raised by the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster (Sir Charles Russell), I do not intend in any way to discuss that question, or anticipate the debate upon it. When I saw the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster, and the hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Onslow), had given a Notice which would indefinitely postpone, if not defeat, the discussion of the Bill which I, in conjunction with several of my hon. Friends, am promoting, and on the success of which we believe depend the lives of many of Her Majesty's subjects, I believed that they had done so merely for the purpose of obstructing the progress of that Bill. Possessed of that idea, I prepared the document to which the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster and the hon. Member for Guildford referred last Tuesday, and I endeavoured to give this document every publicity in my power. I was possessed of the same idea when I replied to the Questions of the hon. and gallant Baronet and the hon. Member; but having had the advantage of hearing them deny that they had any such motive, and having now considered that emphatic denial, and had the advantage of consulting with my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Louth—[*Laughter*]—having had the advantage of consulting my hon. and learned and esteemed Friend the Member for Louth (Mr. Sullivan), I beg to express my regret that, under the impression to which I have already referred, I should have used language towards those hon. Members which, having regard to the statements made by me, I now beg unequivocally to withdraw. Mr. Speaker, I was prevented by an accident from saying yesterday what I have just said. I am very glad of it, for I am now able to say what will be far more agreeable to the feelings of the hon. and gallant Gentleman and the hon. Member than the very guarded and qualified language which yesterday I felt myself compelled to adopt, lest perchance next winter I might find myself face to face with the reflection that I had sacrificed men's lives to the indulgence of personal feeling. I fear that some will think me too credulous in saying what I am about to say; but justice to the hon. Members opposite requires it, and I may say also justice to myself, and therefore I say it with pleasure. I ask my hon. Friends around me—I ask the House—I ask the constituents of the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster and of the hon. Member for Guildford to believe, as I now firmly do, for sufficient reasons, that these hon. Members had no more idea of opposing the Merchant Shipping (Grain Cargoes) Bill than myself, or the hon. and learned Member for Louth who sits by my side. I would not say this if I did not believe it; but, believing it, I am bound under the circumstances to say it. Before the year is out we shall probably be engaged in a General Election—["Order!"]—and we shall be fighting for the seats of hon. Members opposite; but I should be ashamed to obtain any political advantage to my Party by allowing Gentlemen to remain under an injurious imputation an hour longer than I could help, after I knew that it was undeserved. I say this, because it is right and due to them.

Sir CHARLES RUSSELL: Sir, with the permission of the House, I shall say a word or two upon what has just fallen from the hon. Member for Derby. It appears to me that the position of this discussion is no longer a personal matter as between myself and the hon. Member who has just addressed the House; and I only wish to say that, it being now a matter affecting the interests and privileges of Members of this House, I beg to place myself unreservedly in their hands.

Mr. ONSLOW: Sir, I follow in the wake of the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster. Personally, I can only say that the explanation and apology of the hon. Member for Derby will not only satisfy me, but I hope it will fully satisfy the House. The reason why I put down the Notice was because I conscientiously believed that shipping interests and the interests of the British sailors would be enhanced by a proper and fair discussion of the Bill; and I must repeat that a Bill dealing with such vast interests should not be hurried through Parliament without ample discussion. I wish also to say that it has been stated by the Central News Agency that, in concert with the hon. and learned Member for Louth, I had come to a sort of compromise in the matter with the hon. Member for Derby, and that I would make appeal to the Government to give facilities for passing the Bill. I wish to say that no compromise of any kind has passed between us, and I utterly repudiate the paragraph, from whatever quarter it came. My opposition to the Bill has been quite straightforward; and there is nothing in my action in the matter which would justify me in endeavouring to come to "terms" with the hon. Member for Derby. The apology which has just come from the hon. Gentleman is due to conscientious motives, and I would ask my Friends to accept it. I sincerely hope that, if the hon. Member for Derby has any cause of complaint against myself, or any other Member, he will not again complain in the way which he has thought fit to do in this instance.

MR. BENTINCK, who was very indistinctly heard, said, that he thought the question was in a very unsatisfactory state. There had been nothing to justify the language of the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll); and he would ask the right hon. Baronet the Chancellor of the Exchequer that a search might be made for precedents among the Annals of the House. He thought that the House, with a sense of what was due to its honour, should demand an apology from the hon. Member for Derby. Unless some such course was pursued the House would have no security against the repetition of such conduct as was now complained of.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, I am sure that the House has heard with great satisfaction and pleasure the statement of the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) and the replies of my two hon. Friends behind me. No one who knows my hon. Friends could for a moment have supposed that their characters were in the slightest way affected by anything that was said by the hon. Member for Derby; and although it is very satisfactory that the hon. Member for Derby should have made the statement that he has made, and withdrawn, in the distinct and unconditional manner in which he has withdrawn it, the imputation which he had cast upon my hon. Friends, even without that withdrawal, I am quite sure that the House would have entirely acquitted my hon. Friends of having done anything to justify the application of the epithet "inhuman" to their conduct. As far as the personal part of the case is concerned, I think we may now consider the question at an end, my hon. Friends having frankly accepted the apology tendered by the hon. Member for Derby. But we have to consider what is the position of the House in connection with this matter. I am most anxious to avoid introducing any unnecessary element of bitterness into any question that comes before us, and I especially wish to avoid doing so on the present occasion. But we must remember that we have an important trust committed to us in the honour and the independence of this House. I will not trouble the House by going back to old precedents such as could be very easily found, and asking whether this or the other proceeding is in accordance with, or in violation of, the rules laid down in former times. We know perfectly well that with regard to the publicity of our debates and the freedom of criticism which is now allowed to persons outside the House a great change has come over Parliament and the country during the last century, and far be it from me in any way to attempt to restrict the great freedom which has been allowed. On the other hand, we should be cautious not to allow our desire to make our debates as much as possible the open property of the nation to degenerate into a laxity which might lead to improper interference with our proceedings. I wish for one moment to refer to that which may be called the foundation of our Privileges—I mean the clause in the Bill of Rights in which it is laid down that the election of Members of Parliament ought to be free, and that the freedom of speech or proceedings in Parliament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any Court or place out of Parliament. I look upon that clause as a very valuable charter. It is true that at the time when the doctrine it contains was laid down it was not from the people but from the Crown that any invasion of the Privileges or interference with the proceedings of Parliament was to be apprehended; but the principle remains the same at the present time—namely, that the proceedings of this House ought not to be interfered with. Now, I cannot help thinking that if such a proceeding as that complained of on the part of the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll)—namely, the publication in a form widely diffused and appealing to the whole of the constituents of such an important city as that in which we sit, and of so important a borough as that represented by the hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Onslow), of statements having reference, not to past transactions, but to actual current Business, and couched in terms of appeal from this House to the constituencies outside it, is to be allowed to pass unchallenged and unnoticed and to become a precedent, we way find that very serious evil may follow. Of course, we are aware that one class of observations outside the walls of Parliament may easily merge into another class, and that one may be told that what is done here is very little more than what was not objected to there; and so by insensible degrees we may slide, if we are not careful, into a state of laxity which would be most injurious to the independence of this House and to the free conduct of Business within it. I think, therefore, that it is important on the present occasion that we should at least let it be clearly understood that we regard the step taken in the publication of these placards as one which is distinctly beyond the liberties which this House allows its Members. I freely admit on the present occasion, considering that the hon. Member for Derby has, in a very frank manner, and to the satisfaction of the hon. Gentlemen principally interested, withdrawn the expressions which gave offence, and considering that there has been a very great difference of opinion as to the precise lengths to which hon. Members may go outside this House in commenting upon proceedings within it —I freely grant that this is not a case in which to pass words of unnecessary censure upon any individual. At the same time, I think it is right that the House should distinctly express its opinion that the proceeding which has been spoken of is without and outside the liberties which it is the intention of the House to concede in the criticism of its debates; and, therefore, I am of opinion that it would be desirable that we should place upon record some Notice to the effect which I have indicated. The Motion that I should myself be prepared to submit, in preference to the Motion which is now before the House, and which, I presume, the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster (Sir Charles Russell) would be willing to withdraw, is to this effect—

"That, in the opinion of this House, the conduct of the honourable Member for Derby in publishing printed placards denouncing the part taken by two honourable Members of this House in the proceedings of the House was calculated to interfere with the due discharge of the duties of a Member of this House and is a breach of its Privileges:—But this House, having regard to the withdrawal by the honourable Member for Derby of the expressions to which the honourable Member for Westminster has drawn its attention, is of opinion that no further action on its part is necessary."

I think we can in this manner escape passing censure where we think it is not necessary to do so, and, at the same time, distinctly mark that there is a line to be drawn; and I think for the future that line ought to be drawn short of the publication of such a placard as the one complained of.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in the opinion of this House, the conduct of the honourable Member for Derby in publishing printed placards denouncing the part taken by two honourable Members of this House in the proceedings of the House was calculated to interfere with the due discharge of the duties of a Member of this House, and is a breach of its Privileges:—But this House, having regard to the withdrawal by the honourable Member for Derby of the expressions to which the honourable Member for Westminster has drawn its attention, is of opinion that no further action on its part is necessary."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT entirely agreed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the immense importance of the question before the House, because it was a question of the extent to which the House of Commons would raise the right of Privilege as against the discussion of political action out-of-doors. He was, however, surprised, and regretted that the Leader of the House should have departed altogether from the course taken by his Predecessor (Mr. Disraeli) on the last occasion, when a similar occurrence took place. The hon. and learned Member for Louth (Mr. Sullivan), on the 15th of February, 1875, called the attention of the House to the language used with respect to certain Irish Members by a late Member of the House (the present Mr. Justice Lopes). That language was to the effect that certain Members of that House were allied with a disreputable Irish band, whose watchword in the House was Home Rule and repeal of the Union. The matter was taken notice of as a question of Privilege, and it was not denied by the Prime Minister (then Mr. Disraeli) that it might be so treated; but he said—and the speech was delivered before any apology had been made by Mr. Lopes—

"I did not rise before, because I really thought this was an affair which would be easily and not unpleasantly settled. The hon. Member for Louth has had an opportunity of addressing the House at considerable length, and in the vein of glowing rhetoric which we always listen to with pleasure."

Mr. Disraeli then made some observations with regard to the hon. and learned Member for Louth, which he would not read to the House, and went on to say—

"It was really unnecessary, I think, to touch now upon the language used by the hon. Member for North Lincolnshire (Sir John Astley). My recollection is that he withdrew the expressions which were the subject of the complaint; and when an hon. Gentleman acknowledges that he has made a mistake, and has used expressions which, on reflection, he sees are not justified, it is the custom of Gentlemen to forget them."

Now, he (Sir William Harcourt) supposed that the House of Commons was an Assembly of Gentlemen; and they would, he thought, do wisely if they acted on the advice which had been given in that speech by the late Leader of the House. Mr. Disraeli added—

"Then we have the case of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Frome. I am not here to deny that it is a breach of Privilege to speak of any Members of this House in their capacity as such in terms which imply disgrace, or, as the hon. Gentleman said, ignominy. But I must remind the House that the expressions here used—when calmly considered—though they may certainly justify notice, are still not of a very extravagant character."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to say—

"The hon. Member who spoke second in the debate (Mr. O'Connor Power) asks what we on the front Ministerial Bench should have done if this expression had been used respecting us? Well, Sir, what I should have done—and I think I may say what all my Colleagues would have done—would have been to take no notice of it."

Now, an hon. Member of that House had recently, in a speech delivered to a Conservative Association, spoken of one of the most eminent Members of the House as being a man who would sell his soul for office; but he had never heard that the distinguished person who had been so spoken of had thought it worth his while to bring those words before the House as a question of Privilege. Mr. Disraeli further observed, on the occasion to which he was referring—

"At the same time, I do not say that the course we should have pursued ought to prevent Irish Members from receiving the satisfaction to which they are entitled from my hon. and learned Friend, who has now an opportunity in a full House of doing that which is, I think, the privilege as well as the duty of an English gentleman when he has done wrong—that which will only cause his friends to respect him the more—I mean, frankly express his regret for having inadvertently given pain to others. I hope that my hon. and learned Friend will now make use of this opportunity—will remove all ill-feeling on the part of hon. Gentlemen opposite, on account of his language, and that we shall be able to extricate the House from the painful necessity of making this a question of Privilege."—[3 *Hansard*, ccxxii., 329-32.]

Now, that being the course which was taken in 1875, why, he should like to know, should it not be followed on the present occasion? He would next call the attention of the House to another case of very great importance, which occurred in 1844, when a charge of a most odious character was brought by Mr. Ferrand against Sir James Graham—a charge which was unquestionably and undeniably false—that of using his influence, with other Members of the House, to obtain from an Election Committee a false and fraudulent Report. It was impossible to make an accusation more odious or unfounded; and he should like to observe, in reply to the hon. Member for West Norfolk (Mr. Bentinck), who complained that the consideration of the question before the House had been delayed, that that was precisely the course which had been advocated by Sir Robert Peel in 1844. Sir Robert Peel then said that the case was one which ought not to be disposed of in a hurry, ridiculous as the charge was, and unanimous though the feeling of the House might be that it was without foundation. A decision, Sir Robert Peel, who was in favour of the public discussion of the conduct of Members of Parliament, and even of Cabinet Ministers, contended, could not be arrived at on the question without establishing an important precedent; and, therefore, it was desirable, before coming to any such decision, to look back at the Records which were within reach of the House. Considering the great Constitutional question involved, Sir Robert Peel went on to urge the necessity of perfectly free discussion, and the risk that a feeling of indignation might prompt the House to adopt some sudden course which it might afterwards regret. Hon. Members, in their individual capacity, ought to have the means of seeing what had, in similar circumstances, been done in past times, and be afforded an opportunity of deliberating as to what ought to be done in the present. That, he thought, was a sufficient answer to what had fallen from the hon. Member for West Norfolk. But did the House of Commons, he would ask, in 1844, decide that a Breach of Privilege had been committed? No, although the charge brought against Sir James Graham had neither been proved nor withdrawn, Sir Robert Peel would not allow so dangerous a precedent to be set; but he made a Motion to the effect that Sir James Graham and the other Member named having denied in their places the truth of the allegations made against them, and Mr. Ferrand having declined to substantiate his charges, the House was of opinion that those charges were wholly unfounded and calumnious, and did not affect in the slightest degree the honour or the characters of the Members in question. There was in all that not a word about Privilege, for Sir Robert Peel was alive to the danger of passing such a Resolution as that which the Chancellor of the Exchequer now proposed. He would not permit the House of Commons to set so mischievous an example, and put such a restraint on the public discussion of the conduct of Members of Parliament. There was also another case—the Abercromby Case—to which he might refer, which occurred in 1824, when Lord Eldon denounced in the Court of Chancery a Member of the House as having been guilty of falsehood. The matter was brought before the House as a Question of Privilege, and was debated at great length. Some very eminent persons were in favour of pronouncing the language of Lord Eldon a Breach of Privilege; but Mr. Canning and Mr. Peel were opposed to that course, and a majority of the House supported the view which they took. Those were the three great precedents on the subject; and it was clear from them that, in recent times, the House of Commons had not shown itself willing to invoke the shield of Privilege for the purpose of defending its Members from public criticism. If he were to quote ancient precedents, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had very wisely declined to entertain, a rule would, no doubt, be found to the effect that there could be no criticism upon any act of a Member of Parliament in reference to his Parliamentary conduct; and if they chose to act upon the principle of Privilege as laid down in Parliamentary precedent, to speak of a man's vote, even to publish his speech or his vote, or to criticize his vote, was a Breach of Privilege. That was the only principle, if a rigorous course was to be adopted, on which the House could stand. All the rest was a question of degree. It was a question of adjectives, and, as regarded the adjectives of the hon. Member for Derby, they were withdrawn, and they had no place in the Resolution of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. What they were asked to affirm was, that criticizing and condemning the conduct of an hon. Member of that House was a Breach of Privilege. That was how he understood the Resolution. It said "publishing printed placards;" but he asserted there was no difference in the world between a printed placard and a speech. [*Laughter.*] Hon. Members might laugh; but a speech generally was printed next morning, and so became a printed placard. Was the objection, then, that the matter was printed in the constituency concerned? He was sure the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster did not object on that ground. Why, only a few months ago the hon. and gallant Gentleman went down to his (Sir William Harcourt's) constituency to criticize his conduct, and to express opinions in reference to his Parliamentary action. He would not use the word intimidated, because they did not intimidate him; but he knew their language was not encomiastic. At any rate, a sort of *posse comitatis* went down to denounce him to his constitutents. The hon. Member for Staffordshire was one, and the hon. Member for Christchurch (Sir. H. Drummond Wolff) was another, accompanied by a gentleman of whom he never heard before—a Mr. Alfred Austin. They addressed his constituents at great length.

SIR H. DRUMMOND WOLFF: I never mentioned the hon. and learned Gentleman's name in my speech.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: Well, the silence of the other hon. Gentleman of the party might be taken to mean assent in their case. The hon. Member for Christchurch had, no doubt, too much personal regard for him; but he sat and listened to what his friends had to say. Now, suppose he had come down whining to that House for protection against those hon. Members, what would the House have thought? Was the principle to be laid down that no man might write or speak against another man in his constituency? Did it make any difference whether the statements were made in a speech, a placard, or a letter to the newspapers? Did it, moreover, make any difference whether those statements were made by a Member of Parliament or by another person? All these questions were raised by the Resolution which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had submitted to the House. If the objection was that the thing was done in a man's constituency, he would say that a man's constituency was the place of all places in the world where any charges against him ought to be made. For his own part, he had no complaint to make of the Gentlemen who had gone to talk against him in his constituency. He did not remember the phrases they had used; but they certainly did not intimidate him. Those hon. Gentlemen had provided his constituency with an agreeable entertainment, and they did him no harm. He was astonished that the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster (Sir Charles Russell), who was the most gallant man in the world, should not have had more political intrepidity than to come forward and say he had been intimidated by these placards. The question was a most serious one. It was not whether the words used were or were not unjustifiable. They were withdrawn. The question was, whether the House was to declare that printed placards—nothing was said about the character of the language of them, which might be the most respectable—reflecting upon the conduct of an hon. Member of that House, constituted a Breach of the Privileges of Parliament. It seemed to him that, in passing such a Resolution as that before them, the House would be striking a fatal blow at liberty of speech. If, for instance, an hon. Member were to make a speech denouncing another hon. Member for obstruction, was the Member so denounced to come forward and to appeal, under the protection of the Chancellor's Resolution, to the protection of the House? It was too late in the day for the House of Commons to employ the engine of Privilege to smother public criticism upon the conduct of hon. Members. He did not say the Chancellor of the Exchequer had such an intention; but that would be the effect of his Resolution. If a Member of the House used language offensive to another Member, there were other ways of obtaining a withdrawal of, and redress for, the language. If he refused to withdraw that language, as in the case of Mr. Ferrand, then the Member whose conduct was impugned might be vindicated by the unanimous opinion of the Members of that House. But when they drew this old and rusty sword of Privilege for purposes of this character, then he believed the House would be embarking in a course which would land it in immense embarrassment, and in which he saw no end of difficulty. There would be nothing to prevent its enforcing the new doctrine of Privilege against every newspaper and every election placard. The Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman was too wide and too unguarded, and it was absolutely and entirely inconsistent with free discussion in this country. They had much better trust to the strength of the House for the vindication of their character in the manner in which it had been vindicated before. The advice tendered by Mr. Disraeli in 1875, in Mr. Lopes's case, was the proper advice to be taken; and, therefore, following the last precedent of the House of Commons, he would in this case take the course he fully believed the late Leader of the House of Commons would have taken, and, on what was now the substantive Motion of the right hon. Gentleman, move the "Previous Question."

Previous Question proposed, "That that Question be now put."—(*Sir William Harcourt.*)

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir JOHN HOLKER) expressed himself entirely at a loss to understand from the emphatic, not to say vehement, speech of the hon. and learned Member whether, in his opinion, the conduct of the hon. Member for Derby was or was not a Breach of Privilege. If it was a Breach of Privilege, surely there was nothing unwise on the part of the House in resolving that it was so. Was the House to allow its Privileges to be broken with impunity? His hon. and learned Friend wished them to say nothing more about it; but he should have been obliged to his hon. and learned Friend if he had declared explicitly whether he was of opinion that such a placard as that published by the hon. Member for Derby, reflecting upon the conduct of hon. Members of that House in the current Business of the House, was a Breach of Privilege.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT said, that what he intended to say, and what he believed he did say, was that for anyone to take any notice whatever of the conduct of a Member of Parliament in the discharge of his duty in the House, or to comment in any terms whatever upon such conduct or upon his speeches or vote in that House, was a Breach of Privilege.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir JOHN HOLKER) observed, that it was satisfactory to know that the hon. and learned Member did consider that the hon. Member for Derby had been guilty of a Breach of Privilege. He had, however, understood the hon. and learned Gentleman to cite a good many authorities with the view of establishing the contrary proposition.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT said, as this was a very serious matter, he desired that there should be no intentional misrepresentation or misunderstanding of the object with which he had cited those authorities. He expressly stated that Mr. Disraeli said Mr. Justice Lopes' speech was a Breach of Privilege, but that it was undesirable to take notice of it. He had cited those authorities to show that the House of Commons frequently refused to take cognizance of Breaches of Privilege.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir JOHN HOLKER) observed, that, of course, if that were the view of the subject which was taken by the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite, he was contented with it. He was anxious, however, that this question of Breach of Privilege should not be misunderstood. He had been under the impression that the debate on this subject had been adjourned in order that search might be made for precedents bearing on the subject. There could be now no doubt as to what the law of Parliament was upon the subject. The law of Parliament affecting the question under discussion was laid down with the greatest possible clearness in the work of Sir Erskine May, who was a great authority on Parliamentary law; and if hon. Members would turn to that work they would find the law relating to that subject laid down thus—

> "That to print or publish any books or libels reflecting upon the proceedings of the House of Commons, or any Member thereof, for or relating to his services therein, is a high violation of the rights and privileges of the House of Commons."

Then the learned author went on to give instances when libels upon hon. Members of that House had been punished, and that statement of the law was founded not only upon usage and custom, but upon the express Resolutions of the House. As a general rule, he should not ask that undue importance should be attached to Resolutions of that House which were passed some time ago, nor should he ask that the principle of such Resolutions should be rigidly carried into effect on all occasions; but he maintained that such decisions of the House should be treated, at all events, with respect. Therefore, when they found that the House had arrived at a certain decision some years ago, they should not treat that decision as a nullity. Well, then, let them see what Resolutions had been passed from time to time bearing upon this subject. In 1699, a Resolution was passed—

> "That to publish the names of Members of this House and reflect upon them, and misrepresent their proceedings in Parliament, is a breach of the privileges of this House."

Not only publishing, but reflecting upon and misrepresenting them. In 1701 a Resolution was passed—

> "That to print or publish any books or libels reflecting upon the proceedings of the House of Commons or any Member thereof, or relating to his service therein, is a high violation of the rights and privileges of Parliament."

That is a very distinct enunciation of the Parliament of that day. The House had acted upon those Resolutions ever since, and Sir Erskine May gave a long string of cases in which persons found guilty of Breach of Privilege had been dealt with on the principle laid down in them. In many cases such persons had been dealt severely with, although he was far from saying that they should be severely dealt with in all cases. In the case of Mr. Ferrand the House, although distinctly of opinion that a Breach of Privilege had been committed, did not proceed further in the matter on Mr. Ferrand declining to admit that what he had done was a Breach of Privilege or to withdraw his expressions. Then there was the case of Mr. Lopes, which arose in 1875. Mr. Lopes was, undoubtedly, guilty of Breach of Privilege of a minor character; and he dared say what was done in that case satisfied the justice of it. What Mr. Lopes did seemed to him to have been very different from what the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) had done. His speech was delivered some six months before it was taken any notice of—it was said to have been an after-dinner speech; but he did not think that was of any great consequence, and what he said was—

> "What was the present position of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons? They were deserted by their Chief; they were allied to a disreputable Irish band, whose watchword in the House was 'Home Rule or the Repeal of the Union.'"

Those words were uttered in reference to a Party in this House, and Mr. Lopes was not justified in describing the Home Rule Party as "a disreputable band;" but if anyone had felt aggrieved, one would have thought he would not have had waited six months. [Mr. SULLIVAN remarked, that was because Parliament was not sitting at the time.] One would have thought that someone would have made complaint long before the hon. and learned Member for Louth brought the matter under the attention of the House. The hon. and learned Member for Louth, who so chivalrously defended the hon. Member for Derby the other day, on that occasion thought the speech of Mr. Lopes was a Breach of Privilege. Apparently the House was of the same opinion, and Mr. Lopes made an ample apology, on which the then Speaker declared that enough had been done and said in the matter, and therefore it had better come to an end. But what had been the conduct of the hon. Member for Derby on the present occasion? It appeared to him, with great submission to the hon. and learned Member for Oxford, that there was a great difference between the case of a speaker being carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment and that of a man who deliberately printed and published prepared matter. When they came to consider what the hon. Member for Derby said, they found that the very day or the day after the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster and the hon. Member for Guildford had exercised the privilege which every Member of the House was entitled to exercise without fear of being deterred in the performance of his duty, the hon. Member for Derby sat down and deliberately penned a placard and circulated it through the City of Westminster and the borough of Guildford, and in that placard he deliberately libelled those two hon. Gentlemen with respect to the exercise of their privilege in relation to the current Business of that House. Now, could there be a question that the matter contained in that placard was libellous? He had no doubt that the hon. Member for Derby wrote under a feeling of strong excitement. They knew the enthusiam with which he brought forward particular measures; and he (the Attorney General) had no doubt that the enthusiasm was justified, or justified to a great extent at all events. But could anyone question this—that in describing the conduct of the two hon. Members as in certain circumstances "inhuman," and in other circumstances as "degrading," he intended to hold them up to contempt and to bring them into disfavour with their constituents? It was one thing to publish an unfounded libel of a Member, and another matter to quarrel with his opinions. The hon. Member for Derby might have said as much as he liked as to the views entertained by his (the Attorney General's) two hon. Friends with respect to the particular Bill which was before the House. He might have contested their opinions with respect to ships carrying grain cargoes, and so on. But it was not legitimate to publish against a Member of that House, in respect of the Business of the House and the exercise of the privilege of a Member with respect to that Business, libellous matter? It was because the matter was not true that it constituted a Breach of the Privileges of the House; and more because it was designed, he did not say it had the effect, to intimidate hon. Gentlemen from the exercise of their privileges. It appeared to him to be an offence of a serious character; but, undoubtedly, the hon. Member for Derby had apologized in a most manly and candid way, and all of them, he thought, must sympathize with the hon. Member after his most explicit statement. He listened with very much pleasure to what the hon. Member for Derby said; and he confessed that his admiration for his character, which was great before, had been increased by that statement. But, at the same time, he did hope the House would not come to the conclusion that a Breach of its Privileges —and a serious Breach of its Privileges —should be committed without making some protest against it, and recording that, in its opinion, a Breach of Privilege had been committed. All that his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer asked the House to affirm was that the action of the hon. Member for Derby, calculated as it was to intimidate the hon. Members to whom he referred in the exercise of their privileges, was a Breach of the Privileges of that House.

MR. JOHN BRIGHT: Sir, I hope the House will have observed that in the speech of the Attorney General he has dealt very little with the precise question which is before the House. He has endeavoured to show that there was nothing that was grievous, or particularly grievous, in describing an important section of Members of this House, representing one of the Three Kingdoms, as "a disreputable band," and that the fault of the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) was a much more grievous one than the fault of Mr. Lopes. That is the conclusion to which we were asked to come. But that is not the question before the House. The question is, whether what the House has now done in this matter is sufficient, or whether it is desirable to proceed further? The hon. and learned Attorney General began his speech by asking whether this was a Breach of Privilege; and I think he got a very full answer from my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt). Nobody doubts that, according to ancient precedents, it is a Breach of Privilege. But then there have been hundreds of Breaches of Privilege in which the House did not feel, or even imagine, that it would be desirable to place any specific Resolution upon its Records. The hon. and learned Gentleman says—"If it be a Breach of Privilege, why not say so?" From which, I suppose, we are asked to come to the conclusion that wherever there is a Breach of Privilege there ought necessarily to be on the Records of the House a Resolution declaring the Breach of Privilege to be committed. If that were done, I suspect the House would have very little time for any measures brought before it. I apprehend that an Assembly like this august Assembly is not exhibiting its strength, is not adding to its strength, by constantly showing that it has strength. It seems to me that it tends very much more to weakness in the House of Commons than to strength to place such Resolutions on the Records of the House as that which the right hon. Gentleman has proposed to-night. A certain hasty charge was made by the hon. Member for Derby against two hon. Members sitting on that side of the House. The Attorney General admits the enthusiasm of the hon. Member for Derby, and says that he, no doubt, did this under a passionate feeling against Members who had opposed the progress of a Bill which he thought essential to save the lives of some of his countrymen. The position, then, in which we are now placed is this. The House has had the matter brought before it. It has listened to an entire withdrawal of the charge on the part of the hon. Member for Derby. It has listened to an equally open acknowledgment on the part of the two Gentlemen whose conduct was impugned that they are satisfied with what the hon. Member for Derby has done and said. If that be so, the question is whether the House of Commons should not feel satisfied with what has been done, and should not proceed further in the matter. The characters of the hon.

Gentlemen who were concerned have been cleared and have been justified. In the case to which my hon. and learned Friend (Sir William Harcourt) referred—the case of Mr. Ferrand—the Gentleman who got himself into that dilemma—I recollect being in the House when that transaction took place—made no acknowledgment; he was totally unable to prove the charges; the charges were denied; there was not a man in the House of Commons who believed those charges; but the House of Commons, under the direction and advice of Sir Robert Peel, did not think it necessary to place on record such a Resolution as that which the right hon. Gentleman now asks it to adopt. It seems to me that precedents established by a statesman of Sir Robert Peel's character and long experience ought not to be lightly rejected, even by a majority on that side of the House. He was their Leader and guide, and neither before nor since have that Party had a wiser Minister at their head than was Sir Robert Peel. Now, surely every Member of the House will know that the House holds it to be a Breach of its Privileges, and a thing which the House must condemn, if any Member in future follows the example of the hon. Member for Derby. He will know that he had better sleep a night or two before he publishes or writes an injudicious placard. Now, if we pass the Resolution, we put a new weapon not in the hands of the House of Commons to prevent a Breach of Privilege, but in the hands of those who may hereafter be hostile to freedom of discussion. I think you will lessen, or tend to lessen, the freedom of discussion in this House, and the freedom of judgment which Members are at liberty to express of other Members, and which persons outside are at liberty to express with regard to the conduct of parties and individuals within the walls of this House. The question is, has the House done enough, or has it not? If you stop where you now are, have you not done enough to discourage the practice which you have by speeches on both sides, by the acknowledgment of the hon. Member for Derby, and by the common sense of the House, condemned? I should advise the House to let the matter rest where it is. I confess I was greatly astonished when I heard the right hon. Gentleman propose to place on record a Resolution of this kind. Nobody denies that there has been a Breach of Privilege. The hon. Member for Derby is not likely to repeat the fault; no one else will be encouraged to repeat it. If the hon. Members opposite who made a complaint have had their characters cleared, and express themselves entirely satisfied, I would recommend the House very much indeed to adopt the Previous Question recommended by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Oxford, and to refuse to place on their Records a Resolution which they must feel to be unnecessary, and which can never be used in the future except to lessen the freedom of discussion and the freedom of criticism on the acts of public men in connection with the proceedings of Parliament.

Mr. CHAPLIN remarked, that this was no mere legal squabble, but a question of maintaining the high character and reputation of the House; and, in his opinion, hon. Gentlemen ought to mark so emphatically their idea of the proceedings which had been brought under their notice as effectually to prevent their repetition. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had pointed out the danger and mischief of being guided in the matter, in any degree, by vindictive feelings, and he agreed with every word which had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman on that subject; but there was another point of the question to which he desired to call attention, and that was that this was not a hasty act on the part of the hon. Member for Derby. If it had been, he did not doubt that the House would have exonerated the hon. Member immediately; but it was impossible to believe it was a hasty act, or anything else than a most deliberate act. Having regard to the fact that only three or four years ago the hon. Member for Derby had been guilty of an outrage of so gross a nature that he came under the censure of the House, he thought they ought to mark their opinion of his conduct in as emphatic a manner as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had proposed. In fact, he believed an addition ought to be made to the Motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, expressing the censure of the House upon the hon. Member for Derby. Such an addition would have his unqualified support. As far as the

Bill of the hon. Member was concerned, if the statements the hon. Member had made with regard to it could be sustained—as he felt sure they could—he would be prepared to give it his hearty support. But in order to prevent the repetition of this kind of offence, which was likely to bring discredit upon the reputation of the House out-of-doors, he thought they ought to mark their opinion of it in the most emphatic manner.

MR. WHITBREAD desired to reiterate that the question before them was not whether the conduct of the hon. Member for Derby constituted a Breach of Privilege or not, but whether, in all the circumstances of the case as they now stood, it was wise of the House to go further in the matter, and whether, in any case, the course indicated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer was the safe and proper one. There was no doubt that, technically, the conduct of the hon. Member for Derby constituted a Breach of the Privileges of the House; but he thought the speech of the Attorney General was more applicable to the case as it stood before the hon. Member had withdrawn his expressions than to the present condition of affairs. As the two hon. Members immediately concerned were satisfied, he thought the House might have been content not to have proceeded further. It was impossible to defend the action of the hon. Member for Derby; but the real offence consisted, not in the mere publication of a letter or placard setting forth the action of the hon. Member in blocking the progress of the Bill, but in the adjectives employed and the motives imputed. The expressions complained of had been withdrawn, and had been acknowledged to be undeserved. A reference to dates would show that the hon. Member for Derby had taken no long time for reflection, but had acted much more hastily than some hon. Members seemed to be aware. The hon. Member for Mid-Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) had referred to a previous case, in which the conduct of the hon. Member for Derby had come under the notice of the House. Though he could not justify the conduct of the hon. Member for Derby now, or his action on a previous occasion, he thought there were circumstances which might have induced the hon. Gentleman to have refrained from referring, even casually, to what formerly occurred. The hon. Member for Derby was imbued with one idea, and he pursued that idea in a way which sometimes brought him into collision with the House, and under its displeasure. The course which the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed was one on which they would do well to pause. The terms of the Motion seemed to him so sweeping and comprehensive as to cover much more than was intended. Moreover, they ought at least to have the Resolution put before them in print. They all knew what an immense difference was made by the insertion or omission of a single word in their Resolutions; and they were now asked to make, as it seemed to him, a most formidable change in the Privileges of the House—to fetter their action and tie their tongues for all time—by the adoption of words they had had no opportunity of considering. Was that fair to the House? He ventured to foretell that if the Motion were pressed on, either the Rule established by it would be abolished within a year or less, or else it would lead to a constant infringement of what the Attorney General had declared to be the Privileges of the House—yet an infringement which, in many cases, nobody would take any notice of.

MR. MOWBRAY thought the hon. Member who had just sat down had contradicted himself. In the commencement of his speech he had admitted that this matter was a Breach of Privilege. What had been done was declared to be a Breach of Privilege by learned lawyers and by Cabinet Ministers. Nevertheless, the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) hoped to carry the House with him in the hesitation with which he concluded his speech. But it had been admitted that it was a Breach of Privilege. The hon. and learned Member for the City of Oxford (Sir William Harcourt), in rising to move the Previous Question, had said it was true that this was a Breach of Privilege. But he had asked, was it wise to go on with the matter? He thought it was wise, and for this reason, which had not before been put to the House. There had been entered on the Journals of the House the nature of the complaint made by the two hon. Members whose action had been impugned, and that there was upon the Table a Copy of the placard which charged them with inhuman and degrading conduct. It was unavailing to say that the hon. Member for Derby had since withdrawn those statements. They remained in the Journals of the House. But the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had moved that, considering the apology which had been offered, though a Breach of Privilege had been committed, they should not carry it further. The hon. Member for Bedford had complained that greater Notice was not given. But this was no new Resolution; it was a mere change of words to carry out the original proposal. But the only question now was whether it was wise to carry the matter any further; but he thought it was quite impossible for the matter to rest where it was.

Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN said, there could be no doubt that the hon. Member for Derby, acting under what he conceived to be some provocation, and feeling strongly on the subject which he had at heart, had used language which no one could justify or had attempted to justify. But the hon. Gentleman had offered a full and frank apology; and, under these circumstances, why should the Government attempt to put in force a rusty machine which would materially interfere with the liberty of debate? No doubt, in one sense, a technical Breach of Privilege had been committed. But it would lead to monstrous results if everything which was technically a Breach of Privilege was brought before the House. Did anyone believe that the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster (Sir Charles Russell), who carried on his breast the proudest certificate of valour an English soldier could wear, would be intimidated by the language that had been used? He (Mr. Osborne Morgan) thought that the less notice was taken of the matter the better; and he believed that the real Privileges of Parliament were weakened rather than strengthened by discussions like the present.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir Hardinge Giffard) said, that when the conduct of a Member was brought before the House it could not be wiped out from the memory of the House. What was the House to do? Reference had been made to the supposed absence of precedent. But he had looked into the past history of the House, and he had found a precedent which did not go very far back when they were treating of questions connected with that House. A placard which was printed in 1810, and which appeared in *Hansard*, vol. xv., p. 481, was as follows:—

> "Windham and Yorke. British Forms.
> "33, Bedford Street, Covent Garden,
> "Monday, Feb. 19, 1810.
>
> "Question:—Which was a greater outrage upon the public feeling, Mr. Yorke's enforcement of the standing order to exclude strangers from the House of Commons or Mr. Windham's recent attack upon the liberty of the press? Last Monday, after an interesting discussion, it was unanimously decided, that the enforcement of the standing orders, by shutting out strangers from the gallery of the House of Commons, ought to be censured as an insidious and ill-timed attack on the liberty of the press, as tending to aggravate the discontent of the people, and to render their representatives objects of jealous suspicion. The great anxiety manifested by the public at this critical period to become acquainted with the proceedings of the House of Commons, and to ascertain who were the authors and promoters of the late calamitous expeditions to the Scheldt, together with the violent attacks made by Mr. Windham on the newspaper reporters (whom he represented as 'bankrupts, lottery office keepers, footmen, and decayed tradesmen'), have stirred up the public feeling, and excited universal attention. The present question is, therefore, brought forward as a comparative inquiry, and may be justly expected to furnish a contested and interesting debate.—Printed by J. Dean, 57, Wardour Street."

Mr. Yorke, in rising to call attention to this placard, spoke of it as a gross Breach of the Privilege of Parliament. In consequence of this the printer was summoned to attend the House, and the matter was treated in this spirit. The printer said that he had no personal knowledge of the placard in question; but, expressing his regret at what had occurred, he would do his best to make amends by giving the name of the author of the placard to Mr. Speaker. But he would tell the House what had been done. The matter was treated as important, and Mr. Whitbread said that it was necessary to take some further notice of the offence. And the result was that the printer was committed to custody for one hour. The resolution was arrived at on the ground that it was necessary to preserve and keep the right of free discussion in the House. It was not a question of high-handed Privilege for the purpose of repressing discussion, as such, but for the purpose of preserving the right of Members to be free from external influence calculated to intimidate them while discharging their duties. It had been said that the hon. and gallant Colonel the Member for Westminster was not a likely man to be intimidated; but should the question whether a particular individual was likely to be intimidated or not be made the test of a Breach of Privilege? He admitted that no harm had been done in the present case; but the matter had come officially before the House, and the Government, while not desiring the punishment of the offender, asked for a solemn declaration to the effect that to placard the walls of a borough with statements respecting something which an hon. Member had done and was doing in the course of Parliamentary Business constituted a Breach of Privilege. They had heard something about musty precedents. Well, the very fact that the precedents were musty, showed how necessary it was to revive and confirm them; and, in the hope that this might be done, he would support the Resolution of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

SIR HENRY JAMES said, the question before the House was whether this should be treated as a Breach of Privilege, because, as they were reminded by the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Chaplin), the hon. Member for Derby had, upon some previous occasion, been guilty of conduct which, in the minds of the hon. Members opposite, was disgraceful. ["No, no!"] He understood the hon. Member to have so treated the question. They were now asked to place upon the Records of the House a Motion which would denounce the conduct of the hon. Member for Derby as a Breach of Privilege; but in the case of Mr. Lopes no such course was taken. The House upon that occasion recorded its Motion, to the effect that they allowed the Motion describing the action as a Breach of Privilege to be withdrawn. Why should not hon. Members make a similar entry upon the Journals of the House on the present occasion? The charge which was made by Mr. Lopes was a much more serious one than that before them on the present occasion, inasmuch as in the former case no reason was given for the charge, whereas the ground was stated in the latter; and if that proved to be wrong the charge fell to the ground. If, in 1875, the apology of a Conservative Member was accepted by the House, why was the apology of the hon. Member for Derby to be rejected? He appealed to hon. Members opposite to consider whether the remark would not be made that Mr. Lopes was dealt with less seriously than it was proposed to deal with the hon. Member for Derby, because the former was Member of a majority and the latter of a minority. He hoped that there would be no misunderstanding as to the ground upon which he supported the Motion of the Previous Question. A Breach of Privilege had been committed; but Breaches of Privilege were committed every day. Every leading article upon Parliamentary subjects was a Breach of Privilege; and, therefore, it was necessary to take a broad view of the question. If they once held out to hon. Members the suggestion that if anything was said reflecting on their conduct it would be wise to bring the matter before the House complaints would be made every day. He maintained that criticism on the conduct of a Member while discharging his duties must be offered at the time of the discharge of those duties, or be of very little use. In his own borough they did nothing else than criticize his conduct, finding holes in his political character and holding it up to ridicule. He was of opinion that they should approach a question of this kind in a spirit which would allow perfect and free discussion of their conduct. Language had been used such as no one could defend; but an apology having been made and accepted by the hon. Members personally interested, it was scarcely becoming in the majority in the House to refuse to accept the *amende* that had been made.

MR. HARDCASTLE considered the imputation thrown out by the last speaker, that this question was pressed from Party motives, was a most unworthy one. A great deal of dust had been thrown in the eyes of hon. Members by the endeavour to show that Breaches of Privilege were so exceedingly common that they were committed every day, notably by the Press. The only inference to be drawn from this argument was that a Breach of Privilege of the kind now being considered by the House was not distinguishable from a Breach of Privilege by the Press. To talk about a Breach of Privilege such as that under the notice of the House as being no more worthy of condemnation than an article in *The Times* was absurd; and such a line of argument only made it the more necessary that the House, by adopting the Motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, should show that that was not its view of the matter. The argument of the hon. and learned Member for Denbighshire (Mr. Osborne Morgan) that a Notice which would have the effect of preventing the Bill of the hon. Member for Derby being brought on after half-past 12 o'clock constituted anything like a legitimate cause of provocation was most unreasonable; and he must express his surprise that so high an authority as the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) should deem so serious an offence as that under discussion not deserving of censure, and should bewilder the House by advice of such uncertain sound that he had begun his speech by saying that the course pursued by the hon. Member for Derby was a Breach of Privilege, and had ended by saying that he was inclined to think it was not.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON: Sir, I can assure the House that, after the full discussion which has taken place, I shall occupy its attention but for a very few moments on this subject. Not that I think that discussion has been at all too full, for the question is one of very great importance, and may possibly influence the future proceedings of this House. I am very glad to be able, in consequence of what occurred at the beginning of the Sitting, to deal with the subject almost entirely apart from any personal considerations. There can be but one opinion as to the character of the language which was used by the hon. Member for Derby. I admit, speaking for myself, I should have felt very considerable doubt, even if that language had not been withdrawn, whether the House would have acted wisely in taking notice as a question of Privilege of what has been done. But be that as it may, the question is now before us; and the hon. Member for Derby has as fully and frankly withdrawn the objectionable expressions complained of as one could desire. Now, in recent times, our course of action has been rather in favour of relaxing than straining precedents on matters of Privilege; and I should like to know whether there is any precedent for the House taking action of this kind after the offence complained of has been apologized for and withdrawn? If there be no such precedent, is it, I would ask, convenient to make a new precedent while declining to take any further action in the matter? These are points which it appears to me the Government would do well to consider before asking the House to pass this Resolution. It seems to me that a Breach of Privilege has undoubtedly been committed, and we know that the law on the subject has never been repealed, although Breaches of Privilege are committed every day. But we are now going to lay down a new rule, and to say that the conduct of the hon. Member for Derby in publishing a placard denouncing the course taken by certain Members of the House is calculated to destroy their efficiency in that capacity. Now, I have been induced by the cheers of hon. Gentlemen opposite on several occasions to doubt whether it is the publishing of the placard, or the denunciations which it contained, against which this Resolution is aimed, and which constitutes the Breach of Privilege. That is rather an important matter, as placards and denunciations are likely very soon to become tolerably common, and it is desirable that we should understand what it is we may do or may not do in the circumstances. May we go to the borough of a Member of Parliament or a Member of the Cabinet, and impeach his conduct in regard even to the current Business of the House or not? It appears to me that that is a course we should be prevented from taking if this Resolution were to pass. Are we to understand, then, that it is only when denunciations of a Member of the House are embodied in placards that they become a Breach of Privilege? I have always thought that one of the most useless of the many useless election expenses which a candidate has to incur was the crowding of the walls with placards inviting the electors to vote for a particular person. Hon. Gentlemen opposite, however, seem to think there is some peculiar virtue in a placard, and that denunciations of a Member printed upon it are calculated to do him serious damage and to intimidate him in the discharge of his duty. The question was not raised by the Attorney General whether such statements were true or false, and the Resolution is also silent on the point. According to the Resolution, whether the placard be made the medium of false or libellous statements or not, the offence is equally one against the Privileges of the House. I think, therefore, that before we come to a vote upon the subject we ought to have further information from the Government on this point. We ought to know whether the use of placards is to be entirely forbidden, and whether we are no longer to express opinions on the conduct of political opponents? I believe that we should never have heard anything at all of this subject if it had not been for the strong and most objectionable language contained in the placard. But that language is now withdrawn, and is not the subject of the Resolution. The Resolution appears to me greatly wider than the occasion calls for; and I think the House would do wisely to accept the Amendment of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Oxford, and not to create what is, in fact, a new precedent.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: In response to the challenge of the noble Lord, I rise to make a few necessary remarks. In the first place, I entirely deny that we are making any new precedent. In a case of this sort you must make a precedent one way or the other. If you deal with it you make a precedent in one way, if you decline you make one in another. All we propose to do is to make a declaration which, by universal consent, is admitted to be a true one. The question is whether it is desirable or not to put any such question on record. I must remind the House of what is lost sight of—namely, what has already taken place in this case. In the first place, action is taken by Members of this House in a manner perfectly within the Rules and spirit of the proceedings of this House. That action is disagreeable to a Member of the House. Instead of taking the course open to him, and which he ought to have taken—namely, to come into the House and challenge the conduct of those hon. Gentlemen—instead of asking for any explanation, which he would have received and have been satisfied—as we now find that these Gentlemen are not open to the accusation against them—he goes and appeals from the Members to their constituencies by a public placard. That in itself is a very serious step to take; and when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright) speaks of what we are proposing to do as a restriction on the freedom of debate I must say that it is decidedly the opposite. It is to secure freedom of debate, and to secure to Members full liberty to conduct the Business of this House according to the Rules of the House and the dictates of their own consciences. It is very important that the following considerations should be borne in mind. On the day the question was put to the hon. Member for Derby as to the course he had taken, the hon. Member not only avowed that he had put out these placards, but stated, in addition, that such an act was well within the Rules and principles of the House. As far as the particular language was concerned, the hon. Member has, on better consideration, withdrawn it; and, so far as those particular epithets are concerned, we have nothing to say except that the hon. Member has made a proper apology, which has been received in a proper spirit by the hon. Gentlemen concerned. But he has not withdrawn or qualified his statement that in making such an appeal to the electors he has been doing that which is within his right. You have the fact on record. Now you are going to leave on record that the censured words were withdrawn on the ground of their being offensive, but that the justification of the act was condoned by the House. That is not the position the House ought to take. This is not a case like that of Mr. Justice Lopes, in which language had to be explained or apologized for in the House. We are not now asking the House to pass any censure or to take any proceedings against the hon. Member. But we do think it is necessary that the House should declare that this kind of interference with its conduct and Business ought not to be allowed to pass without a record on the part of this House that it is a kind of Breach of Privilege we cannot pass over in silence. The noble Lord has said—"May we put out our election notices," and so forth. That is not the question. Here is a particular offence, and we announce by this Resolution that this particular placard was a Breach of the Privileges of the

House. We are taking a course which has nothing of haste in it; but one which is really essential to the maintenance of the dignity and independence of the House.

MR. JUSTIN M'CARTHY said, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the explanation he had just given, had raised an entirely new and distinct issue from that which the Attorney General had explained, and he had made the position of the House a good deal more difficult and more perplexing than it was before. It was no longer the printing of placards, as opposed to the making of speeches or the writing of letters, which constituted the offence of the hon. Member for Derby, but interference with the conduct of hon. Members in regard to the Business of the House. Now, if the Resolution were passed, what would be the practical result of it? Sensitive Members of that House would be at liberty to raise questions of Privilege every day as to newspaper articles or outside criticism of any kind, which was surely not a state of things to be encouraged. Those who went into the game of politics must expect occasionally to be censured, misrepresented, or even insulted. To pass Resolutions condemning the conduct of Members as constituting a Breach of Privilege by means of a heated partizan majority would be to bring the decisions of the House into contempt. He strongly appealed to the Government not to press this matter, and to allow the question of Privilege to rest in its present safe, but vague and undefined, position.

MR. O'DONNELL said, he must complain of the unnecessary delay which the Government had occasioned by pressing this subject forward in place of proceeding with the Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

MR. O'DONNELL, in resuming his speech, said, that he could not but think the Government had made a serious mistake in seizing upon the conduct of the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) for the purpose of limiting the rights of freedom of opinion. The hon. Member for Derby had obtained a reputation for his humanity which, he thought, would long survive any paltry triumph of Her Majesty's Government either in Zululand or in Afghanistan. The hon. Member for Derby was misled as to the conduct of the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster (Sir Charles Russell), and of the hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Onslow), in consequence of the frequent declarations of the Leaders and supporters of the Conservative Party.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

MR. O'DONNELL said, he did not sympathize with the well-meant efforts of his hon. Friends to obtain an audience for him, and he would be much obliged if they would abstain from them during the remainder of his speech. He admitted that the language used by the hon. Member for Derby was utterly indefensible, and might well be characterized as most coarse and violent. He could find no parallel to it outside the language of the Ministerial Party with reference to the land agitation in Ireland. The hon. Member for Derby could not have spoken worse if he had been a Member of the Conservative Party denouncing the hon. Member for Meath. The Government were for going back to the days of Toryism and the days of comparative slavery. He denied that the placard was gross or libellous. What laughter it would excite in this country if an Irish Parliament sitting on College Green were to make a mere question of what one Member had said of another a matter of such moment as this placard had been in that House. Or suppose it was posted on a wall, for the constitutents of the right hon. Baronet the Chancellor of the Exchequer to see, that he was not so competent to lead the House of Commons as his distinguished Chief was to lead the House of Lords. He congratulated the Ministerial Party on their conversion to the policy of Obstruction, which had received an additional advocate in the person of the Chairman of Committees—the Deputy Speaker of that House—who adopted that policy in relation to the Ancient Monuments Bill of the hon. Baronet the Member for Maidstone (Sir John Lubbock). What, he asked, must be the consequence of placing the Motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon the Records of House? Why, it would be found necessary to bring before the House the conduct of the right hon. Gentleman himself in going to the electors of Birmingham and endeavouring to prejudice them against their Representatives; it would be necessary to bring the present Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs before the House for his unworthy description of Members of the House as Circassians and Bashi-Bazouks, and to act in a similar way towards the Secretary of State for India for his threat "to pulverize obstructive Members in the massive machinery of the House of Commons." The hon. Member concluded by charging the Government with encouraging obstructive tactics on the part of Conservative Members.

MR. BIGGAR contended that the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer was untenable, inasmuch as it would suppress all reasonable criticism upon the conduct of hon. Members of that House. [The hon. Member then recounted at some length the circumstances out of which the present debate had arisen.] While so engaged—

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MR. BIGGAR resumed. What had been done by the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll), he contended, was a thing which was done every day; and he (Mr. Biggar) himself had more than once found occasion to find fault with the action of some Members of his own Party. However the hon. Member for Derby might be held to be guilty of a Breach of Privilege, he had certainly done nothing to bring upon himself a censure by the House. Nothing was more common than for newspapers to criticize unfairly the sayings and doings of public men to whom they were politically opposed; but was the House prepared to call to its Bar the representative of every journal that might in that way abuse the Privileges of the House? The hon. Member for Derby had, under the circumstances, having made an apology, naturally supposed, he (Mr. Biggar) had no doubt, that the whole matter would be at an end; and it was therefore ungenerous to propose a Resolution such as that before the House, which was simply, he was afraid, an electioneering piece of work. In fact, the proceeding now being adopted against the hon. Member for Derby was purely a Party one, bearing upon the General Election. The language used by the hon. Member was, in fact, far less objectionable than some which had been used in that House, and which had been upheld by the Conservative Party. [The hon. Member read at length a number of passages from *Hansard* in support of his views, in the course of which he took occasion to express his opinion that the subject could be more conveniently and appropriately discussed on the Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill.]

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MR. BIGGAR resumed, proceeding to read at length further passages from the Reports of the Debates. In the course of his remarks, he referred to an amicable arrangement which he believed had been arrived at with regard to the apology of the hon. Member for Derby, and to which he understood the hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Onslow) was a party.

MR. ONSLOW denied, as he had done when first this discussion commenced, that he had been a party to any such arrangement, and said that nothing but an unequivocal apology would have been accepted.

MR. BIGGAR said, he was bound to believe the hon. Member. At the same time, there could not be the slightest doubt that negotiations had taken place with regard to the terms on which an apology would be accepted. He was sorry his hon. Friend the Member for Derby had not stood his ground. His language, considering the evidence then before him, was not too strong; and he was sorry also that he had been involved in negotiations which he believed had taken place.

MR. CHARLES LEWIS said, that he felt justified in calling the attention of the House and the country to what had been going on for the past two and a-half hours. Two hours ago they had had an elaborate discussion on the subject of Privileges; and now, with the Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill upon the Paper, the House was still engaged on the same matter, the interval having been occupied, with the exception of time wasted in three ineffectual counts, by the speeches of three Members of that particular section of the House which had been most prominent and loud in assaults upon the Government for not attending to Irish distress. It would be waste of words to deal with those speakers, or to say anything more than to draw the serious attention of the whole country to what was being done in this House under the circumstances.

Mr. O'DONNELL rose to ask, if it was in Order to threaten Members of that House with the indignation of the whole country?

Mr. SPEAKER said, that the words used were quite Parliamentary.

Mr. CHARLES LEWIS continued, that he had intended to rise at an earlier period of the evening, but that he was anxious not to delay the Business on the Paper. Since half-past 10 the evening had been wasted; and he was informed that there was a certainty that, if one person did not rise to prolong the discussion, another would. No one admired his hon. Friend the Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) more earnestly than himself; he fully recognized all his humane efforts in favour of British sailors; but he could not but see that he was sometimes mistaken in the means he used; and he was inclined to think that the hon. Member periodically got up these excitements in order to keep the question well before the country. He desired also to call attention to the attitude of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite. They had had four speeches from the front Opposition Bench. He would refer first to the speech of the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread), who began by saying yes, and ended by saying no; however great an authority he was on such a subject, he could only say that he had quite befogged the House as to what his real opinion was. Then they had had the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Denbighshire (Mr. Osborne Morgan). But it was singular that the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Hartington), whose high character and gentlemanly feeling and dignity none admired more than himself, had not spoken. The noble Lord had, instead of taking his proper position as Leader of the Opposition, allowed the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt) to be the great spokesman upon that occasion. The hon. and learned Gentleman had, as usual, treated the whole matter as a huge Party joke, and then the right hon. Member for Birmingham had risen immediately to support him in his view. He (Mr. Charles Lewis) was not surprised at the attitude of those hon. Members, for the House knew that during the past six months those hon. Gentlemen had been the great professors of political vituperation throughout the whole of England. If anything like constraint were to be imposed upon hon. Members outside that House, those hon. Gentlemen would be the greatest sufferers, for the one had been the most prodigious, and the other the most prolific, in his censure of the Government. David, it was written, had said that the fool said in his haste that all men were of a certain class; and they could not read a single letter by the right hon. Member for Birmingham without finding that he declined the vague impartiality implied by David, and employed a certain designation, not for the world in general, but for his own political opponents. As to the hon. and learned Member for Oxford, he had not been fortunate in the precedents which he had cited to the House—especially in the case of Lord Eldon and Mr. Abercromby. The hon. and learned Member pointed out that no censure was passed on that occasion. But why was no censure passed? Simply because the House of Commons did not wish to come into conflict with the House of Lords. What was the second case referred to by the hon. and learned Member? Why, the case of Ferrand, a most exceptional and violent case, in which the censure of the House was not passed, because the case was so extreme that all the censure that the House could have passed would have been inadequate. The third case referred to by hon. Members opposite was that of Mr. Lopes. There could be no more unfortunate analogy than that drawn between that case and the present one, for in the former the alleged offence was committed when Parliament was not sitting, by a Member speaking of the conduct of a class of persons and dealing with their general character as politicians; and that was compared with the case before the House, which was not one of verbal slander. The hon. and learned Member for Oxford had asked, in the theatrical way he was so fond of assuming since he had enjoyed the advantage of a seat on the front Opposition Bench, whether the House "drew the line at placards?" Of course, they drew the line at placards. Was the hon. and learned Gentleman not lawyer enough to know the great difference between oral and written or printed slander? Written language necessitated deliberated action, and was evidence of malice. In the matter before them they should not only consider the issuing of the placard, but the circumstances under which it was issued. In this case, it had been issued at the very time a Notice was on the Order Book that the second reading of the Bill in question should be taken that day six months; that Notice having been given by a Member who had as much right to take that course as the particular Member had to put down the second reading. Supposing the case had referred to a Member whose constituency was 500 miles away from London, what would have been his first impulse? Why, to rush off to his constituents and endeavour to justify his actions, thereby absenting himself from his Parliamentary duties, which it might be at the time most necessary for him to attend to. No doubt, the hon. and learned Member for Oxford had pursued his course with the view that it would be palatable to those of whom he had made himself a distinguished patron. The hon. and learned Member had, on recent occasions, displayed tender feelings towards hon. Members of a certain class below the Gangway, and, having the gift of prophecy, he felt that the case, if censure were passed, might be applicable at some future time to his Home Rule Friends. Well, he (Mr. Charles Lewis) hoped the speech of the hon. and learned Member might have the effect of cementing the union between the branches of the Liberal Party more successfully than in two important constituencies in which the public had lately taken much interest. He thought the House should, in the case before it, take such steps as would discourage persons from following a course similar to that followed by the hon. Member for Derby. They all knew the generous feelings which actuated that hon. Member; but it was not to be endured that from time to time such a mode of promoting particular measures should be pursued in or out of Parliament. The question had not been raised as a Party question on the Conservative side of the House; but the action of right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite had been such as to render impossible what was usual on similar occasions—namely, the union of the front Opposition Benches. He (Mr. Charles Lewis) himself thought the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had taken a most lenient course in bringing forward the Motion, for he had no hesitation in saying that it would be a most unfortunate thing if they were to have a Court of Appeal outside the House, in which violent appeals could be made to their constituents, their conduct described as inhuman, and their character degraded, while the House remained quiescent and refrained from vindicating its honour and integrity.

MR. O'CONNOR POWER said, he had taken part in so many abortive debates on questions of Privilege, that he would not have risen but for the remarks of the hon. Member who had just sat down (Mr. Charles Lewis). The hon. Member had made very desperate efforts to catch the ear of the whole country since the commencement of the present Session of Parliament; but he (Mr. O'Connor Power) did not suppose that the attempt he had just made would meet with any larger measure of success than the previous ones. The hon. Gentleman adopted a style of reasoning by which the country was not likely to be caught, and the House had had another example of it that evening. The judgment of the country would not be founded on the conduct of his Colleagues in that debate, but upon the statement of the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll), and the perusal of the debate that followed it. If a proposition was sound, it was sound independently of the authority upon which it was enunciated. While charging the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis) with having a very short memory, he must say that he agreed with him in thinking that the present case and that of Mr. Lopes were not parallel, but for a different reason. The cases were not parallel, because the offence committed by Mr. Lopes was unjustifiable; the great distinction between the offences being that, while the language of the hon. Member for Derby referred only to the policy and the conduct of hon. Gentlemen, the language of Mr. Lopes referred to hon. Gentlemen themselves, whom he characterized as a disreputable Irish band. The country, he felt satisfied, would not fail to see that all the excitement which had been displayed in the course of the discussion was nothing more than a storm in a teapot; and if there was no ulterior motive for censure of the hon. Member for Derby, then the House of Commons had never been engaged in a more futile debate than that in which they had been engaged since the Chancellor of the Exchequer submitted his Resolution. A peculiarly offensive libel on his hon. Friend the Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell) had appeared in *The Globe* newspaper; but when the matter was brought before the House the Chancellor of the Exchequer was in no hurry to reprove the libeller. The fact was the Government had engaged themselves in an impossible undertaking. They had two different measures of Parliamentary liberty which they attempted to apply; in the one case as regarded the language which hon. Members might use in debate, and, in the other, as regarded the extent to which obstruction might proceed; but he warned them that they had, in the present instance, entered upon a useless contest. Outside the House, those for whom he spoke had learned from them the lesson of force; while many inside the House had learned from them a lesson in obstruction which they were not likely soon to forget. As to indecency of language, he had heard of a time in the history of the House when an hon. and learned Gentleman did not think it beneath him to squeal like a cat; but, be that as it might, he hoped the House would never allow itself to be made the tool and instrument of the Government for the suppression of free criticism on the conduct of public men. The language of the hon. Member for Derby was, no doubt, strong, and out of all proportion to the conduct which it was intended to condemn, and, therefore, it was language which should not have been used; but it nevertheless did not, in his opinion, in the slightest degree go beyond that which was his privilege as a Member of the House of Commons. It did not transcend that for which precedent existed; and he challenged hon. Gentlemen opposite to produce one that would justify the censure they sought to pass.

Mr. FINIGAN explained, that if he had during the progress of the debate called attention to the fact that there were not 40 Members present, he had done so from a Parliamentary point of view, deeming it right that there should be a sufficient number of Members in attendance to admit of the discussion being conducted with advantage. As for the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis), he thought the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) might well say of him, "Save me from my friends!" The hon. Member for Derby, in calling the attention of the constituency of Westminster to the action of their Member, had done a great public service, and no more than was daily done by other hon. Members of the House. He hoped the Previous Question would be carried.

Sir GEORGE BOWYER regretted that this should have been made a Party question, seeing that hon. Members on both sides were equally interested in upholding the dignity and independence of the House and the freedom of debate. There was no doubt the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) had been guilty of a Breach of Privilege, and, everybody being agreed upon that point, he should have thought the matter might well have ended with the hon. Member's apology. The law of Parliament on the subject was perfectly clear. Anything that was done with the intent, or that was calculated to intimidate Members of the House in the discharge of their duty, was a Breach of Privilege. The law of Parliament being clear, it did not seem to him to require a special Resolution of the House such as that proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to declare it. The Government would have acted more wisely if they had declared the law on the subject to be clear, and that it was not necessary to re-assert it. It was a pity that some hon. Member of influence did not point to a way out of the difficulty into which they had got and prevent a further waste of time. Matters of Privilege should be kept apart from Party questions; and if a division were taken on the Resolution the force of the decision of the House would be weakened.

SIR JOSEPH M'KENNA, in opposing the Motion, said, he thought that the terms of the placard, although objectionable, did not amount to a Breach of the Privileges of the House.

MR. WADDY said, that as one of the latest importations to the House, he had had to go through a course of treatment a great deal worse than that which had been complained of by the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster (Sir Charles Russell) and the hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Onslow); and although he had been subject to so much of it his health was certainly unimpaired. He could not but think that too much had been made of this placard warfare, and that the hon. and gallant Gentleman who had complained looked in as good health as he (Mr. Waddy) did. Certainly the language complained of was severe, and was unjustifiable; but, after all, it was gross flattery compared with the statements which had been made about himself in a placard warfare in Sheffield about two months ago. However, he had survived that language, as all of them would survive similar language if it were applied to them. He thought that it would have been better for each of the two Members who had complained of the language of the hon. Member for Derby to have said to himself, *Virtute meâ me involvo*, and to have refrained from complaining. He thought that the waste of time incurred over the Motion was entirely owing to the Resolution of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that the Resolution was calculated to produce a false impression in the country. In the case of Mr. Ferrand, which had been quoted, that Gentleman had stood to his guns, and, although his language was most improper, had refused to apologize, and in that case the House took no steps against him; whereas in this instance a retractation had been offered, and yet they had a Resolution which asked the House to call bold words to be a Breach of Privilege, which everybody admitted to be a Breach of Privilege. The speech of the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis) was of a most extraordinary character. Because the hon. and learned Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt) and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright) tried to save the House from becoming ridiculous by passing the proposed Vote of Censure, the hon. Member charged them with dealing as partizans with this matter. He felt compelled to make the observation, after the speech of the hon. Member for Londonderry, that whenever anything like justice was attempted to be supported by certain hon. Members of the House, there were certain other hon. Members, and also certain organs of public opinion, who tried, as far as possible, to make political capital out of the matter by misrepresenting the views and opinions so expressed. The secret was that the General Election was approaching, and it was thought that a good cry against the Liberals would be that they were going in for Home Rule, when it was known that that was untrue. It was said for a purpose, and it was said for a purpose which was unworthy and unfair. He accused the Government of obstructing the Business of the House by the Resolution, and contended that the matter had assumed an importance which it did not possess originally, but only since the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The difficulty with the right hon. Gentleman was that the charge was made by placard. Now, as he (Mr. Waddy) had already said, he had had placards denouncing him a few weeks ago, but he did not disturb himself about them; and, if the hon. Gentlemen opposite would allow him to say so, he thought they did not trouble themselves so much about them as they appeared to do. In conclusion, he hoped that some means might be devised by which, without losing their dignity, and without attempting to hunt to the death an hon. Member who had done all he could in the matter, they could avoid the painful and unworthy conclusion at which they were asked to arrive.

SIR H. DRUMMOND WOLFF said, he did not wonder at the remarks which had been made by the hon. and learned Member for Sheffield (Mr. Waddy), as he had been returned to that House by the Home Rule votes, and in the speech which he had just delivered had spoken in deference to his supporters.

MR. WADDY rose to Order. He wished to ask Mr. Speaker whether any hon. Member had the right to impute to him unworthy motives, or that he had been instigated by other motives than those that were right and patriotic; and also, whether the hon. Member was entitled to say that what he had done was in deference to a certain class of his constituents?

Major O'GORMAN hoped that the Speaker would not answer the Question of the hon. and learned Member.

Mr. SPEAKER: I listened very attentively to the observations of the hon. Member for Christchurch, and I cannot say that there appeared to be anything in those observations which was out of Order.

Sir H. DRUMMOND WOLFF said, he did not mean to imply that, in espousing the Home Rule cause, the hon. and learned Member for Sheffield (Mr. Waddy) had been guilty of want of patriotism. As to the charges made against him by the hon. and learned Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt), he (Sir H. Drummond Wolff) denied that he had acted in the manner imputed to him, or had tried to set the constituency of Oxford against the hon. and learned Member. There was no analogy between the speeches made by the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster (Sir Charles Russell) and himself at Oxford to which the hon. and learned Member for Oxford had referred and the question now before the House. With respect to the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll), whose advocacy of the Mercantile Marine had excited general admiration, he had never taken up a decided position either for or against his Bill. He had never taken up a position against any hon. Member of that House; and as to the speeches made by the Home Rule Members of that House they were very amusing, and he did not object to them. He considered that the House was bound to record its emphatic protest against the course which had been taken by the Opposition on that occasion.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN thought the hon. Member for Christchurch (Sir H. Drummond Wolff) had been a little mixed in his argument. He could not see what Home Rule had to do with this question. The Opposition had been blamed for failing to see the distinction between newspaper articles containing comments upon hon. Members, and such conduct as that of the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll). They saw the distinction plainly enough; what they complained of was that no distinction was made in the Resolution. If hon. Members wanted to censure the hon. Member for Derby the Resolution did not go far enough, for there was no censure of the hon. Member contained in it; but if they wanted to lay down a principle for the future the Resolution would apply as well to an article in a newspaper as to the placard of the hon. Member for Derby. Provincial newspapers were accustomed to publish what were called "London Letters," which largely consisted of remarks upon the personal conduct of hon. Members. He had himself seen an amusing letter of that description in *The Newcastle Chronicle*, which, he understood, was contributed by a Member of that House. If the precedents quoted to them on the part of the Government were worth anything, they should send for the printer of the placard and hand him over to the custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms for a week, and then commit the hon. Member for Derby to Newgate. They were to have considered to-night some Resolutions dealing with obstruction; but the Government came down and created new sources of obstruction, of which he ventured to say they would not hear the last for some time. If it were carried, every Member would be entitled to appeal to it, and ask the House to declare that a Breach of Privilege had been committed in almost every newspaper in the Kingdom.

Mr. ONSLOW said, no one would complain of any remarks made in these "London Letters," however foolish they might be; but it was a very different thing when an hon. Member of that House appealed during the Session to the electors of a particular constituency as to the action taken by a Member with regard to a Bill before the House, and endeavoured by an unconstitutional course to intimidate that hon. Member. There was no analogy between the two cases. He repeated that, as far as he was personally concerned, he was thoroughly satisfied with the repudiation of the hon. Member for Derby; but he thought it due to the dignity of the House to pass the Resolution, of which he cordially approved. In order, however, that no one might think he was actuated by vindictive feelings, strong as was his conviction that a gross Breach of Privilege had been committed, he should decline to vote for the Motion, and should absent himself from the House during the division.

MR. SULLIVAN said, there could be no doubt a Breach of Privilege had been committed. The articles which would be published to-morrow morning in the newspapers in reference to the present debate would also be a Breach of Privilege. But were they acting wisely in departing from modern precedent and taking notice of the placard, even though it were admitted to be a Breach of Privilege? Technically, it was a matter deserving censure for anybody to hold up the conduct of any hon. Member to censure; but, of late years, the House had alway shrunk from doing what they were asked to do that night. Breaches of Privilege such as that complained of were committed every day. Why, he could name seven journals in which the conduct of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich (Mr. Gladstone) in connection with the Eastern Question was described as traitorous, and some 20 journals in which the action of certain hon. Gentlemen on his side of the House was declared to be degrading to honourable institutions. Yet the word "degrade" was the very one relied upon in the case of the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll). He feared that the effect of what was proposed to be done that night would be to place a dangerous weapon in the hands of a strong majority in the House against a minority. There were three recent cases in which the House had shrunk from voting censure or punishment after the receipt of an apology. The first was the case of Mr. Aston, who was not a Member of the House, and the last that in which the hon. Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell) was concerned. He (Mr. Sullivan) had been denounced himself in placards; but he should have felt that he was trifling with the time of the House if, although technically he would be within his right in doing so, he had brought the matter under its notice. The hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis), who had unhappily a habit of making violent speeches in that House and running away the moment he had made them, had referred to the precedents which had been quoted by the hon. and learned Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt); but the manner in which he had dismissed them, as not bearing upon the present case, was, he thought, scarcely worthy of serious consideration. Yet such were the arguments on which the House was asked to agree to a Resolution which would inflict a heavy blow on the precious privilege which for many years Parliament had enjoyed—the most scrupulous respect for the rights of minorities. The hon. Member for Derby, he might add, had never consulted him in the matter. If he had done so the placard would never have been issued. He had, however, urged his hon. Friend to apologize to the House for what he had done, and he regretted exceedingly that the House had not responded to his apology in a proper spirit. He implored them, before it was too late, not to take a course which would not only be ungenerous towards his hon. Friend, but hurtful to the liberties of Parliament.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY said, that it seemed to him that the offence of the hon. Member for Derby in publishing the placards was about as bad a one as could be committed against a Parliamentary Colleague. If that hon. Member, in the frankness of his heart, had not made the ample apology he had done, he should have felt compelled to have given his vote in justification of the character of the two hon. Members opposite who were aspersed by the placard. Although, however, the hon. Member for Derby had, so far as he was personally concerned, condoned, in the most ample manner, his offence, now, for some reason, which it was worth while inquiring into, the question had not been allowed to drop in the manner in which questions were usually allowed to drop in that House after the hon. Member who had transgressed had made his peace with his Colleagues. There was one thing in the course of the debate which had particularly struck him, and which appeared in the observations of the two hon. Members who had been aspersed. It seemed to him that the question of Privilege of Parliament, when raised, should be fought out upon the most lofty principles. But anyone who had listened to the observations of the hon. and gallant Baronet the Member for Westminster and of the hon. Member for Guildford could not help being struck with the fact that the gravamen of the offence in their eyes seemed to be that the placards had been circulated amongst their constituents. The hon. Member for Guildford had spoken of "his borough," as if it were a kind of possession of his. The offence had been against the dignity and independence of Parliament; and it seemed to him to be a very low ground on which to pass a Resolution, which might be attended with most awkward consequences, that harm had been done with the constituents of the hon. Members. No Parliamentary precedent had been quoted which exactly fitted in the present case. The offence of Mr. Lopes was one which did not at all resemble that of the hon. Member for Derby. Mr. Lopes spoke of a Party, not of an individual, as "disreputable,"—an epithet which had often been applied to Parties on either side of that House. He had heard Gentlemen on the other side of the House frequently called "disreputable Tories;" but he did not suppose that they cared the least about it. It was not right, however, that any hon. Member should be held up to odium, in the Metropolis or elsewhere, for taking any course which he thought it was his duty to take with regard to any particular Bill. With respect to the question of Privilege, he had put the question to himself why the Government and the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been so particularly anxious to get up that very disagreeable debate. The only conclusion he could come to was that the Government wished to prevent the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) from bringing on his Motion. He had no doubt that the Government were not particularly anxious that the hon. Member for North Warwickshire, who had by the chance of the ballot obtained a very early day, should bring on his very inconvenient Motion with respect to obstruction. The only effect of the Motion would, no doubt, be to illustrate obstruction in that House, for no one could suppose that the Motion would be passed so long as some hon. Members felt it was aimed against them and the constituents they represented, and he might say against the country they represented in that House. It could not be supposed that anything of that kind could be passed by a private Member, so long as a voice, or energy, or Parliamentary precedents could prevent such a calamity. Therefore, he thought that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, being unable to influence the hon. Member for North Warwickshire, had found it the wisest course to raise that particular debate. Considering the language that had been used on both sides of the House by hon. Members, he did not think that anybody could really wish to crush the hon. Member for Derby by such a Resolution as the present. He wished to say, however, with regard to the particular measure which the hon. Member for Derby was anxious to bring forward, that he was of opinion, equally with the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster and the hon. Member for Guildford, that the measure ought to be fully and amply discussed in that House. He could quite understand that, actuated by a sense of duty, those two hon. Members had taken the course which had been so objectionable to the hon. Member for Derby. But what would become of the House of Commons if any hon. Member, having a Bill in which he was particularly interested and which he considered of vital importance, should, if anyone should undertake to discuss the Bill or to talk it out of the House, as was sometimes done—and he might say that he had seen it done by hon. Members of great reputation—go out of the House to attribute to those making use of their Parliamentary Privileges the basest and most improper motives? He should, therefore, have been prepared to vote in condemnation of the conduct of the hon. Member for Derby, if he had not apologized in the handsome manner he had done. He was not prepared to lay down a rule, in view of future circumstances, that any hon. Member who felt so strongly as that hon. Member did on that question, and was so conscious that he was doing something which was good that he feared nothing in carrying the matter through the House, should not only be compelled to apologize for his conduct, but should be censured also. Surely it was the best indication of the Privileges of that House that the hon. Member should have been compelled to apologize. He should, therefore, vote in favour of the Previous Question; and he would repeat his regret that, in vindicating the Privileges of that House, the two hon. Members who had been aggrieved should have made it a matter of injury to their electioneering prospects rather than a question of the Privileges of Parliament.

Major O'Gorman wished to say a few words upon the question. He was the only Member of that House who on Tuesday last recommended his hon. Friend the Member for Derby to recall the words he had made use of with respect to the hon. and gallant Baronet the Member for Westminster and the hon. Member for Guildford. For that proceeding he stated his reasons—namely, that he considered the words were extremely harsh, and he had no doubt that those words did very strongly wound the feelings of both those hon. Members. That evening the hon. Member for Derby had, in the most unequivocal manner, made the most ample apology which it was possible for that House to receive. Notwithstanding that in the presence of English, Irish, and Scotch Gentlemen, the most ample apology for the offence he had committed had been made by the hon. Member for Derby, he found that the House was committed to the debate which had lasted from 5 o'clock till 25 minutes past 12. For what purpose? He rose to ask that simple question. They called themselves Gentlemen in that House, and they ought to be so. But when they found Gentlemen getting up in their places, as one hon. Member in that House had done, and making a full apology to the two Gentlemen whom he had offended, he maintained that nothing more was required. When he found one hon. Gentleman standing up in his place and making the most ample apology to those hon. Members whom he had undoubtedly offended, then not one word more should have been pronounced in that House. And what were they doing? They wanted to punish the hon. Member for Derby. If they did not want to punish him, what was the use of putting the Motion down on the Paper? Were he in the place of the hon. Member for Derby, he should certainly recall his apology in consequence of the conduct of the House. There was only one other matter to which he wished to refer, and that was to say that it seemed to him the only good of the debate was, that it would prevent the hon. Member for North Warwickshire from bringing on his Motion.

Previous Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 189; Noes 127: Majority 62.—(Div. List, No. 16.)

MR. RYLANDS moved the adjournment of the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: I must point out to the hon. Member that the House has now decided that the Original Question be put.

MR. RYLANDS: Shall I, Sir, be in Order in moving the adjournment of the House? If so, I beg, Sir, to move the adjournment of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The only question that can now be decided is "Aye" or "No" on the Main Question, ordered by the vote of the House to be put.

Main Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 182; Noes 116: Majority 66.—(Div. List, No. 17.)

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this House, the conduct of the honourable Member for Derby in publishing printed placards denouncing the part taken by two honourable Members of this House in the proceedings of the House was calculated to interfere with the due discharge of the duties of a Member of this House, and is a breach of its Privileges:—But this House, having regard to the withdrawal by the honourable Member for Derby of the expressions to which the honourable Member for Westminster has drawn its attention, is of opinion that no further action on its part is necessary.

QUESTION.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (ORDER IN DEBATE).

RESOLUTIONS (MR. NEWDEGATE).

MR. NEWDEGATE said, the Notice he had given for that evening in regard to the Business of the House was now precluded by the hour from discussion. He wished to put a Question to the Government; and an answer to it would, he believed, be acceptable to a very large number of Members in that House. He wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether Her Majesty's Government would make any proposition to that House on the subject of the Notice which stood in his name, or would they give him a day upon which he could proceed with the Notice he had prepared?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Her Majesty's Government, having considered the Motion of my hon. Friend upon the Paper, had determined to abide the discussion of that proposition. Circumstances, however, having prevented his Motion being brought forward to-night, and as I think there might be some difficulty in finding conveniently a day to bring it forward, I think it would be a preferable course that the Government should bring forward a Motion themselves; and I shall on Monday next give a Notice to that effect.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND) BILL.

(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. James Lowther, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.*)

[*Progress* 19*th February.*]

[BILLS 1, 84.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

MR. BIGGAR, who had given Notice to move the following Clause:—

(Loans to occupiers of agricultural holdings.)

> "And whereas, by reason of the distress amongst the occupiers of land in Ireland, it has become desirable to extend the powers and facilities for granting loans under the provisions of the Land Improvements Acts and under the provisions of 'The Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878,' and 'The Public Health (Ireland) Amendment Act, 1879:' Be it therefore Enacted, That the Commissioners of Public Works shall, at any time after the passing of this Act, have power to lend money as set forth in Section 9, and at the same rates, to occupiers of agricultural holdings, on the security of their said holdings, for permanent improvements on the soil,"

said, he desired to know whether the Government proposed to agree to the Amendment, of which he had given Notice, with regard to electoral disability. If they did so, he was disposed not to move the clause which related to giving loans to the actual occupiers of holdings. As he could not undertake to argue the point of his Amendment that night, he would be obliged, in the event of an adverse reply being given from the Treasury Bench, to move that Progress be reported.

MR. J. LOWTHER said, that the Bill as it stood complied with the conditions prescribed by the ordinary Poor Law; but the measure being an exceptional one, and dealing with a temporary emergency, the Government thought that the principle of the new clause might be accepted, provided it was duly guarded.

MR. BIGGAR said, that the reply of the right hon. Gentleman was perfectly satisfactory to him.

Clause 9 (Validation of loans).

MR. LAW moved, at the end of the Clause, to add—

> "Whenever by any award, or otherwise, the rent payable by a tenant shall be increased by reason or in respect of any works executed on his holding under the provisions of the Land Improvement Act and this Act, then, and in every such case, the works so executed shall, so far as such increase of rent shall be paid by such tenant or his successors in title, be deemed to be improvements made by such tenant within the meaning of the 4th section of 'The Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Act, 1870.'"

MR. BRUEN said, it was rather inconvenient to discuss the Amendment at so short a Notice. He had some interest in the alterations suggested, and thought it would be better that the proposed Amendment should be in the hands of hon. Members for a short time to admit of consideration. It appeared to him that the right hon. and learned Gentleman had overlooked altogether the fact that the increased rent which the tenant paid was in consideration of the increased value of the land, and that the increased rent did not convey to the tenant any right of ownership. He could not agree with the principle of the Amendment, and hoped that the matter would not be decided before the words had been placed in the hands of hon. Members.

MR. LAW said, that if the tenant paid money for improvements on his farm he did not see why those improvements should not be considered as belonging to him in proportion to the amount which he paid.

Amendment *agreed to.*

Words *added.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clauses 10 to 13, inclusive, *agreed to.*

Clause 14 (Tax to be divided like poor rates).

MR. LAW moved, as an Amendment, in page 8, line 40, after the word "him," to add the words—

> "Provided always, Whenever the net value of the whole of the rateable hereditaments occupied by any person having no greater estate or interest therein than a tenancy from year to year or holding under any lease or other contract of

tenancy shall not exceed four pounds, the cess payable in respect of such hereditaments under any presentment, pursuant to this Act, shall be applotted on the immediate lessor of such person; and, if at the time of applotting any such cess the name of the immediate lessor shall not be accurately known to the person applotting the cess, it shall be sufficient to describe him as 'the immediate lessor,' with or without any name or further addition; and such cess shall be held to be duly applotted on him by such description, and shall be recoverable from him accordingly, and all the provisions contained in the Act of the sixth and seventh years of the reign of Queen Victoria, chapter ninety-two sections two, three, four, and six, respectively, as to the recovery of poor rate rateable in respect of such hereditaments, and as to the deduction of the whole of such rate for the rent payable by the occupier in case such rate shall be recovered from or paid by him, shall apply to the cess payable in respect of such hereditaments under any presentment pursuant to this Act."

Amendment *agreed to.*

Words *added.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 15 (Remuneration for county officers).

MR. SHAW said, it was undesirable that the Grand Jury should have the power, as they would have if the clause were agreed to in its present form, of awarding any amount they pleased as remuneration to landowners. It would be very easy and much better that the whole of this business should come before the extraordinary presentment sessions for consideration, as, according to the wording of the clause, after the road was passed the jury could award any amount they pleased.

MAJOR NOLAN suggested that the case would be met by the insertion of the words, "such sums as have been awarded by the extraordinary presentment sessions."

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY said, that in the next paragraph the Grand Jury had the power of ordering compensation to owners of ground without previous application to the presentment sessions. He did not think the words suggested by his hon. and gallant Friend (Major Nolan) would do away with the difficulty.

THE CHAIRMAN pointed out that there was no question before the Committee.

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 16 (Audit of accounts) *agreed to.*

Clause 17 (Repayment to the Treasury).

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY desired to know what further advances were intended to be provided for as expressed in line 9 of this clause? Did the phrase include the advances made under the earlier part of the section to owners of land; to extraordinary presentment sessions; or did it include anything for the purposes of relief? He moved the omission of the words, "and to provide for further advances under this Act."

MR. J. LOWTHER said, that th further advances referred to were the unpaid instalments of loans which had already accrued, or which might accrue.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER moved, from page 10, line 14, after the word "of," the omission of the words "five hundred," in order to insert the words "seven hundred and fifty."

Amendment *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 18 (Extension of borrowing powers of Commissioners of Church Temporalities) *agreed to.*

Clause 19 (Repayment to Church Commissioners).

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER moved, in page 10, line 38, after "by," to omit the words "Boards of Guardians."

Amendment *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 20 (Indemnity and Saving) *agreed to.*

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY moved, in page 4, after Clause 8, to insert the following Clause:—

(Expenses.)

"If in any electoral division the expense to be borne by such division as union charges and electoral division charges for the relief of the poor under the Poor Law Acts shall exceed by one fifth the highest rate levied on such division during the last four years, so much of such expense as shall exceed the said highest rate levied during the last four years, together with one-fifth of such highest rate, shall be charged and levied upon all property rateable to the relief of the poor in Ireland."

Undoubtedly, the distress and its relief would press very heavily on the electoral divisions, and be the cause of future distress and want. The object of the Amendment was to apply to Ireland, in a limited manner, the principle which was in operation among the 3,000,000 or 4,000,000 of inhabitants of London.

Mr. SHAW said, he was quite satisfied with the clause as it stood. The Government did not seem to think that the distress would be much extended. If so, the provision made would be sufficient; but if the distress became very severe something more would be required. Probably if the distress became much more severe, the Government would step in and assist them by a national rate. He thought that his hon. and learned Friend would be wise in not pressing his Amendment.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY begged to withdraw the clause.

Clause, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. BIGGAR stated that he did not propose to move the clause which stood in his name (Out-door relief not to involve electoral disability).

House *resumed.*

Bill *reported;* as amended, to be considered on *Monday* next, and to be *printed.* [Bill 84.]

TURNPIKE ACTS CONTINUANCE ACT, 1879.

Select Committee *appointed,* "to inquire into the Fifth Schedule of 'The Annual Turnpike Acts Continuance Act, 1879:'"—Lord George Cavendish, Mr. Wentworth Beaumont, Mr. Beach, Sir Harcourt Johnstone, Mr. Clare Read, Mr. Spencer Stanhope, and Mr. Salt:—Three to be the quorum:

Instruction to the Committee, That they have power to inquire and report to the House under what conditions, with reference to the rate of interest, expenses of management, maintenance of road, payment of debt, and term of years or other special arrangements the Acts of the Trusts mentioned should be continued:

That all Petitions relating to the continuance or discontinuance of Turnpike Trusts be referred to the Committee:

Power to send for persons, papers, and records.—(*Mr. Salt.*)

House adjourned at a quarter before Two o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 23*rd February,* 1880.

MINUTES.]—*Sat First in Parliament*—The Lord Clanwilliam (Earl of Clanwilliam), after the death of his father.

Public Bills—*First Reading*—Settled Land (14); Conveyancing and Law of Property (15); Solicitors Remuneration (16); Limitation of Actions (17).

Committee—Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement (Scotland) Act (1875) Amendment * (8); Seeds (Ireland) (10-18).

SETTLED LAND BILL — CONVEYANCING AND LAW OF PROPERTY BILL — SOLICITORS REMUNERATION BILL—LIMITATION OF ACTIONS BILL.

BILLS PRESENTED. FIRST READING.

The LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, I have to ask your Lordships' indulgence while I call attention to some subjects which certainly cannot be made interesting, and I think I shall deserve your indulgence by making the statement I have to make as short as possible, consistently with the importance and the difficulty of the subject. I propose to lay on the Table for first reading four Bills; three of them are mentioned in the Notice Paper, but I propose to add a fourth, in order that your Lordships may have before you all the propositions in regard to the changes in the law which Her Majesty's Government desire at this time to make. In point of form, a statement on each of these various Bills might be made separately; but I think I shall here again consult your Lordships' convenience by saying at once all I have to say on all the Bills, in order that you may have before you in one view the whole of the changes which would be effected should these Bills pass into law. The first of the Bills to which I refer is one "For facilitating sales, leases, and other dispositions of settled land, and for promoting the execution of improvements thereon." On a title of that kind I might very naturally be able to enter at large on the whole question of the policy of entails and settlements in this country. But I do not intend to do so. I should be quite prepared at any time, if it is thought desirable that there should be a discussion on the subject, to state to your Lordships the reasons which, at all events, satisfy me that, whatever objections may be pointed out to our system of settlement, the advantages of that system greatly preponderate over those objections, and are in themselves so important that there is no good reason for altering the system as a system. I have seen it stated that our system of settlements was a creation of the law of this country. That, I think, is a misapprehension. Our system of settlement is not a creation of the law. It sprang out of freedom of contract, and it is merely the result of adjusting the natural rights of property by the arrangements which have been found desirable in their own interest by parties interested in the ownership of land. The law has done nothing more than protect the system; and I do not think that a greater proof of the advantage and suitability of our system of settlement to the wants of the people and of the country can be found than this—that the system itself is the result of the experience of 300 years. During that time the forms of settlement which are now generally adopted have been growing up, and have gradually settled down into their present shape; and the circumstance that they are, as a general rule, found in that shape, when they might have assumed any other shape, is the strongest proof that the form in which we now have them is the form most suitable to the interests of the country. I have had myself, on more than one occasion in this House, to say that it appeared to me that, desirable as our system of land settlements was, there was one condition which, in my judgment, must be complied with in order to maintain that system in its integrity. I think the system of settlements cannot be looked at merely as an affair of family compact. The settlement of land in this country must be looked at also as affecting the land of the country and the interests of the country. The interests of the country are connected with the mode in which the land is used —with the leasing of land, with the building upon land, with the mining under land, with the improvements generally which may be effected and ought to be effected on land, and with the freedom of buying and selling land. And the condition which appears to me to be necessary to be secured in order to justify the maintenance of a system of settlement is this—that there should be connected with settlement, in the person who may be the owner of the land for the time being—whether tenant for life or not—I say there ought to be in him all the powers which a prudent and reasonable owner would exercise for good purposes connected with the land, while there ought not to be the power of using the land for any purpose destructive of the settlement. Everything that a prudent and reasonable owner, if he were absolute owner of the land, would be able to do with it, in my judgment, a limited owner ought to be able to do, and nothing more. I believe that if that condition had been complied with—if that condition is now complied with—there will be nothing whatever in the system of settlement of land which could possibly interfere with the best interests of the country. It would be quite possible that the end which I have mentioned might be attained by powers given in the settlement itself to the limited owner or tenant for life; and it is the case that in many settlements, and more especially in modern settlements, extremely large powers of the kind I have mentioned are given — powers which enable the land to be utilized for every purpose for which a prudent and reasonable owner would utilize it. There is no reason why these powers should not be contained in any settlement, and in every well-drawn settlement they are, in a greater or lesser degree, contained. But, at the same time, there are many settlements of which it cannot be said that they are very carefully or judiciously prepared; and, in addition to that, there is a considerable amount of land which is brought under settlement, not by settlement properly so called, but by disposition by will, very imperfectly framed, in which there are no powers of the kind to which I have referred. It is also the case that even in settlements prepared with considerable care, the powers for utilizing land are very often—indeed, I may say very generally — conferred upon trustees, and not upon the tenant for life; and the experience of mankind shows that the trustees are very often persons—one does not wonder at it—of some timidity. They have little or no interest themselves in the exercise of the powers conferred upon them. They are anxious to avoid responsibility, and they consider that they avoid responsibility so long as they decline to exercise those powers. The result is that in a great number of settlements which contain carefully prepared and well-drawn powers, the circumstance that these powers are conferred upon trustees and not upon the person who is interested in using them —namely, the tenant for life—leads to the powers being actually unused. Now, in default of the internal powers of utilizing land under settlement, I want your Lordships to observe what I may term the external powers of utilizing land — that is to say, powers which are independent of what may be contained in the settlement. Now, these external powers may really be stated in a very few words. For very many years in this country—indeed, for some centuries — the only power external to a settlement for utilizing settled land was a power given by a Statute of Henry VIII. for leasing the land; but that power was not given to the tenant for life, but was only given to the tenant in tail. Next to that, there was, for a great number of years, one power only external to a settlement which could be obtained in this country—namely, the power which could be obtained through the medium of a Private Act of Parliament. I have seen a statement—which I believe to be authentic—that in the first half of this century no less than 700 Private Acts of Parliament were obtained for the purpose of conferring powers for utilizing settled land. As your Lordships know, the obtaining of a Private Act of Parliament is a very expensive proceeding. I believe no Private Act costs less than £300, and I have heard of some which cost as much as £3,000. Next to these powers, other powers external to settlements are given under Acts of Parliament, with which many of your Lordships are familiar, by which a tenant for life borrows money, for the purpose of executing improvements, and creates a rent-charge for repayment. Under these Acts, improvements are executed at an average cost of 7½ per cent to the tenant for life. Beyond this, the greatest alteration of the law for the purpose of giving powers to utilize settled land is contained in the Acts called the Leases and Sales of Settled Estates Acts. The first of those Acts was passed in 1856, having been introduced by my noble Friend the late Lord Chancellor Cranworth. That Act was subsequently amended by several additional Acts; and, finally, in 1877, there was a consolidating Act, which now contains all the powers of the Leases and Sales of Settled Estates Acts. The object of these Acts is to enable the provisions which were previously obtained by means of a Private Estates Act to be communicated to a particular estate through the medium of the Court of Chancery on an application to the Court. The proceedings, in the first instance, are very cumbrous. The petition has to be presented to the Court, then advertisements have to be issued in certain newspapers, then notice has to be given to all persons concerned, and then, when publicity is secured, and every person is represented before it, the Court proceeds to decide whether a power of leasing or a power of selling can be given to a particular person with reference to the particular estate before it. If the land is to be leased, the Court settles the form of the leases—at all events, the principle on which they are to be framed; and if there is to be a sale of the settled estates under the immediate direction of the Court, the conveyance has to be settled by the Court. Although certain simplifications have latterly taken place in the procedure under the Act, still the procedure is a cumbrous one, and not one extremely well adapted for the easy utilizing of land. Further, there is this difficulty with regard to the Settled Estates Act. Sales can only be made for two purposes —for re-investing the money arising from the sale of one estate in the purchase of another, and for paying off incumbrances upon settled estates. Moreover, the powers which are given are generally given to the trustees of the settlement, and, therefore, are open to the observation I have made with regard to the powers of trustees; and above and beyond all the difficulties of the case, the Act enables any person by the settlement to evade the operation of the Act altogether. The Settled Estates Act, and the Acts under which borrowing powers are given, the Government do not propose to alter. We leave them as they are, and if any person finds that they will be useful he will be at liberty to use them; but the Government desire to proceed upon a different and larger principle. The principle we think should be adopted is this—that the powers which can be obtained under those Acts should not be given as a boon or as an exception in particular cases, but should be part and parcel of the enjoyment of the estate by the owner for the time being, as legal incidents of his ownership, and that those powers should be given, under proper safeguards, not to the trustees, but to the persons naturally most interested in the exercise of them—the tenants for life. I will now proceed to lay before your Lordships the provisions of the first Bill to which I refer, avoiding at this stage any details which can be avoided. The Bill is altogether one of 53 clauses. I will omit at present the distinctions which the Bill makes between existing and future settlements—that is to say, settlements which have already been executed, and those which will be hereafter executed. I will also postpone, in laying before your Lordships the powers we propose to confer on the tenant for life, the question as to what will be done with the monies produced by sales and partitions. I will state now the powers we propose to give to the tenant for life as an incident of his estate. We propose, in the first place, that he should have a power of sale—that where there are copyholds held of a manor he should have the power to enfranchise for the purpose of selling the inheritance in fee simple; that he should have a power of exchange, giving or receiving in the usual way money for equality of exchange; and that he should have a power of partition, giving or receiving money for equality of partition in the same way. The Bill proposes that these powers should be guarded in the usual way adopted to secure the obtaining of the best price at sales by auction. Some of these powers are powers which would naturally be contained in any well-drawn settlement. They would be given sometimes to a tenant for life, sometimes to a tenant for life with the consent of the trustees, and sometimes to the trustees with the consent of the tenant for life. We propose that, subject to certain checks, the powers to be given to the tenant for life should be incident to his estate. So also with regard to leases. We propose that the tenant for life should have power to grant agricultural leases for 21 years. There is a longer term with regard to Ireland, because, at present, under the Settled Estates Act, the term for agricultural leases in Ireland is a term of 35 years, and this will remain the same in the Bill. The Bill will also give power for granting building leases for 99 years, and mining leases for 60 years. Further, it is proposed that, with the consent of the Court, where in any part of the country there is a special custom with respect to building and mining leases, as is the case in some parts of England, power should be given to conform to that special custom in those places where it prevails. There will be the usual provisions with respect to rent and covenants, the usual provisions as to building and mining leases, as to streets and open spaces in connection with building leases, and so forth. We also propose that the tenant for life should have correlative powers as to the surrender and granting of new leases, and also the power, in case of copyholds, of granting licences to the copyholders to make such leases as the tenant for life of freeholds would have leave to make. These, again, are powers which in any well-drawn settlement would be given either to the tenant for life or to the trustees, or to him with the consent of the trustees, or to the trustees with his consent; and we propose that they should be given to the tenant for life as incidents of his estate. With regard to what is to be done with the purchase money. The purchase money in the case of sales, and, indeed, in all cases in which the powers given by the Bill are exercised, is to be paid, not to the tenant for life, but to the trustees, not being less than two, or into Court; and as to the purposes to which the monies may be applied, I will take the enumeration of them from the Bill. They are — payment of incumbrances and redemption of land tax to the rent-charge, and other rents affecting the settled land; payment for any improvement of the estate authorized by the Act; payment for equality of exchange or partition payment for the enfranchisement of copyhold land which is settled; payment for the purchase of fee simple of leasehold land which is settled, so as to merge the leasehold interest in the reversion; purchase of leasehold lands and copyholds to be settled; purchase of freehold land and of mines and minerals and easements; payment to any person becoming absolutely entitled, or having power to give an absolute discharge; payment of the charges incident to the exercise of the powers of the Act. Until these payments are made the money is to be invested on securities on which the trustees are authorized to invest the trust money with power to vary the investment, but subject to the directions given by the settlement. These are the general purposes to which the monies are to be applied. With regard to improvements, the second of the purposes named, I will not go into them at any length; but I may state that they are 20 in number. I believe that they comprise every improvement which it would be desirable to execute upon any land; and your Lordships will understand that they are not merely improvements upon particular land, but improvements upon almost any part of the land subject to the settlement; so that the money, although arising from one portion of settled land, may be employed upon any other part of the land. The next provision in the Bill is one relating to improvements of a different kind. In some cases it may be more convenient that the tenant for life should execute the improvements with his own money; and we propose that if he does so he may charge the land with the money so laid out, to be raised after his death, so that he may dispose of it in any way he thinks fit by his will; but in that case we propose that there should be a certificate of the Inclosure Commissioners to the effect that the improvements have been properly executed, and are worth the money expended on them; and, further, that they are continuing improvements on the land. The mention of the Inclosure Commissioners reminds me to state the provision made in one of the Bills with respect to them. The Inclosure Commissioners are at present a Board having three names under different Acts of Parliament—they are Inclosure Commissioners, Copyhold Commissioners, and also Tithe Commissioners; and I am not sure that any one of those names represents properly the greatest amount of business they now discharge. We, therefore, propose to get rid of all those three names, and that the Commissioners shall in future be called Land Commissioners. The next provision is one relating to settled money which at present is in the Court of Chancery. There is in that Court a very considerable amount of money subject to settlement trusts — money which has been lodged when land has been taken for railways and other public undertakings, and which is the subject of settlement, and is liable to be re-invested in land, but has not been re-invested. We propose that wherever there is settlement money of that kind it may be utilized for any of the purposes for which, if it had remained settled land, the money produced by the sale of such land might be applied. I will now state the qualifications or checks on the powers conferred by the Bill on tenants for life First of all, with regard to the mansion-house or any settled land usually occupied therewith, we propose that it should not be sold or leased without the consent of the trustees of the settlement or an order of the Court to that effect. There will not be, as a matter of course, the right to sell or lease under the Bill. The mansion-house or land occupied therewith cannot be dealt with by lease or sale without the authority of the trustees or of the Court; and wherever the Court is to be invoked a summary application may be made, and the Court is required to communicate, if necessary, with the Land Commissioners, and not to give its sanction to the lease or sale of the mansion-house without notice to the parties interested. With regard to improvements, it is proposed that none of the capital money arising under the Act shall be employed in paying for any improvement without the certificate of the Land Commissioners, certifying that it is an improvement authorized by the Act, and that it is properly executed. As to the differences between existing settlements and future settlements, what we propose with regard to the former is that the powers to which I have referred should not be exercised without an order of the Court, the Court acting with due regard to the interests of all parties concerned, and due notice being given to afford the parties interested an opportunity of being heard. We propose, in the first instance, that the tenant for life—or the trustees, as the case may be—should go to the Court for power to do what may be required, and that the Court should decide the matter, after hearing objections. The check with regard to future settlements is this. We propose that the tenant for life, when about to exercise any of the powers, shall inform the trustees of the settlement what he is about to do. If the trustees make no objection, the power may be exercised; if, on the other hand, they object, the Court, under a summary proceeding, will decide the question. Such is the general effect of the powers we propose to give by this Bill; and your Lordships will see that if this Bill passes into law you will have in every case an owner who is able to represent the land for all purposes of good, and that the Government desire to remove every obstacle to the beneficial use of land that could arise out of the fact of there being a settlement, without, at the same time, trenching on the principle or practice of settlements as arranged by the members of a family.

I have now to ask your Lordships' permission to state the character of the second Bill, which has for its title "An Act for simplifying and improving the practice of conveyancing, and for vesting in trustees, mortgagees, and others, various powers commonly conferred by provisions inserted in settlements, mortgages, wills, and other instruments; and for amending in various particulars the law of property, and for other purposes." Some of the alterations we propose to make are extremely technical, while others are of a more popular nature. The general object of the scheme of the Bill, which contains 64 clauses, is to shorten very much the present cumbrous system of conveyancing, reducing it into a narrower compass, and so lessening the expense. The first part of the measure deals with questions of contract and conditions of sale. Under the present practice, where land comes to be sold under proper advice, it is always sold under certain conditions of sale. Now, a number of these conditions are of such constant occurrence that they may be said to be regular. It is proposed, to save expense, that these ordinary conditions of sale shall in all cases be part of the bargain. The Bill next relates to what are called searches. Various searches are at present required to be made as to incumbrances at different offices, and they have to be repeated from the very beginning in every dealing with the land. It is proposed to follow the course found very useful in Ireland and elsewhere — that the person who wishes that any search should be made should state on paper to the officers what the search is, stating what fact he wishes to ascertain, as for instance, whether there are any judgments against A. B.; the office is thereupon to answer that question, the answer is to become a certificate of title, and the office will be relieved from further trouble. The search will be made by the office, and the certificate will be evidence for the purchaser. The Bill next proceeds to deal with the question of notice. That is a matter of great complexity. We propose that a purchaser of land shall not be prejudicially affected by notice of any instrument or fact unless it is within his own knowledge or has come to the knowledge of his solicitor while acting as such, or would have come to the knowledge of the purchaser, or of his solicitor as such, if they, or either of them, had made such inquiries as they, or one of them, ought reasonably to have made. A number of further sections in the Bill, taken together, will regulate the composition of deeds in sales and mortgages. An attempt has been made in a former Act to obviate the repetition of words which occur in deeds. The idea is a good one; but it has not been successfully carried out. After the best advice that can be obtained, this Bill adopts a new set of forms, which will be found useful in this point of view. There are some clauses which deal with the technical difficulties that have arisen with reference to receipts, and the Bill provides that receipts for the purchase money shall be endorsed on the deeds. The Bill nexts deals with the question of the production of title deeds; and in order to put an end to the controversy which has long existed on this subject, it provides, once for all, that a covenant for the production of title deeds shall always run with the land. I now come to a subject which has excited a good deal of attention lately, the subject of covenants and the forfeiture of leases. The law as to the forfeiture of leases stands in this way. There are in every lease a number of covenants on the part of the lessee; and in case any of those covenants are broken there is a right of re-entry on the part of the lessor to avoid the lease. As regards the covenant for the payment of rent, the doctrine of the Court of Chancery always was that the proviso for re-entry was only inserted in order to enable the landlord to enforce payment, and not to enable him to avoid the lease in case of non-payments; and the Court would, on application, relieve a tenant against forfeiture on payment of the arrears of rent and the cost; and by an Act of 1860 the same power was given to the Courts of Common Law. This doctrine, however, was not held applicable in other cases of breach of covenant. For example, breach of a covenant to insure was formerly held to entail a forfeiture, although no fire had occurred, and, consequently, no loss had been sustained. Some years ago, however, a measure was introduced into Parliament by Lord St. Leonards (then Lord Chancellor), which authorized the Courts of Equity to give relief in cases when no loss had been sustained by such a breach of covenant, and this power was, in 1860, extended to the Courts of Common Law. But no such power at present exists in case of the breach of any of the other covenants usually contained in leases; and these covenants, and the consequences of the breach of them, have really become matters of great importance, there often being inserted in leases great numbers of covenants of the most trifling description, the unintentional breach of any one of which may involve forfeiture of the property to which they relate, notwithstanding that large sums of money may have been laid out upon it by the tenant. I should be very sorry to propose to your Lordships to pass any measure which would interfere with any contract actually entered into; but the Bill I now lay before you will not touch any individual contract, but will merely determine the manner in which the Courts of Equity shall deal with a particular point of law. The Courts of Equity have for generations held that where money is concerned the provision for a re-entry in a lease was only a sort of security for the payment of any damage that might result from a breach of covenant. We do not propose to deal with insurance, we leave that on its present footing; but where there is a breach of any other covenant giving a right of re-entry, we propose that the landlord shall not proceed to re-entry or forfeiture till he has given notice to the tenant, requiring him to remedy the breach and to make satisfaction for any damage which has occurred. That, my Lords, may lead to a settlement of such questions between landlord and tenant; but if the landlord, notwithstanding, should proceed by action or otherwise, then the Court may grant or refuse relief, according to circumstances. The operation of the section, however, does not extend to a covenant against assigning, underletting, or disposing of the land leased without licence, or in the case of a mining lease to a covenant for allowing the lessor to have access to and inspect the books, &c., or to inspect the mine, or in the case of an agricultural lease to a covenant relating to cultivation. In the case of mortgages, where the mortgagor is entitled to redeem, power is given to require the mortgagee to assign the mortgage debt and convey the mortgaged property as the mortgagor may direct. Power is also given to the mortgagor to inspect the title deeds, and there is a restriction imposed on the consolidation of mortgages. Leasing powers are also given to mortgagors and mortgagees in possession. Power is also given to a mortgagee to sell and to insure, and to appoint a receiver. I now come to a part of the measure which relates to the devolution of trust and mortgage estates, under which such estates are, on the death of the trustee or mortgagee, to devolve upon his personal representative. Then comes a clause relating to the appointment of new trustees. Then we propose to make a change in the law as to the acknowledgments of deeds by married women. That is a ceremony introduced some years ago, in which married women are examined by a solicitor, called a Commissioner for taking acknowledgments of deeds by married women. This is a ceremony which everyone who knows anything of the subject admits has proved idle and useless, and we propose to abolish it altogether. Then come a number of clauses as to sales and leases on behalf of infant owners in fee, and as to the management of infants' estates. Then, as to powers of attorney, we propose to give a power of extending them absolutely for one year. At present, if a power of attorney is given to act, say, on the other side of the world, by the time it arrives the giver of the power may be dead, and the power will thus have expired. We propose, therefore, to allow all such powers to be made invocable for a year. Certain technical words in deeds for the conveyance of land are rendered unnecessary, and long terms are rendered convertible into fee simple estates. Finally, the name of the Inclosure Commissioners is changed to that of Land Commissioners. There is added to the Bill a Schedule of forms of a mortgage deed with further charge, of a conveyance on sale, and of a marriage settlement, all of which are printed on two sheets of paper, and which will be a great improvement on the old cumbrous forms. I could not have ventured to propose these two Bills, which contain so great a number of details of a technical kind, if I had not had the assistance of several very able and experienced practitioners, amongst whom I may mention Messrs. Wolstenholme, Burrell, and Reilly; and I wish publicly to express to these gentlemen the great obligations I am under for the immense trouble they have taken in the preparation of these measures. I also wish to express my thanks to almost every conveyancer in Lincoln's Inn for criticisms and advice, not on the Bills themselves, but on heads of the Bills which I submitted to them.

The next Bill to which I ask your Lordships' attention is not on the Notice Paper; but it is closely allied to those I have already described. The result of the second Bill, if it becomes law, will be to alter, to an immense extent, the length of legal instruments with respect to real property. The remuneration of solicitors in such cases depends, strange to say, very much on the length of those instruments. It is as if physicians were remunerated according to the quantity of medicine they can persuade you to take. The only wonder is that so little evil has been produced by this system; and I must acknowledge that I have never seen, on the part of solicitors, anything but an earnest desire to save their clients all the expense they could, and not to benefit themselves from the state of the law as it exists. I do not, however, think it fair to take away the length of instruments which fixed their remuneration, and provide nothing in their place. We therefore propose in the third Bill that there shall be a power given to the Lord Chancellor, the Master of the Rolls, and the three Chiefs of the Common Law Divisions, to make rules for the remuneration of solicitors in non-contentious business—that is to say, leases, sales of property, settlements, and the like — and to allow them payment by a commission or percentage, in the same way that brokers are remunerated for the transfer of stocks. That, I believe, will not only be satisfactory to the solicitors, but beneficial to the public. Nothing can be more satisfactory to the person who is going to buy an estate than to know that if it costs £50,000 he can tell beforehand what he will have to pay a solicitor for his costs. The Bill also provides that solicitors and their clients may agree upon the remuneration to be paid for non-contentious business; but if it is to be a percentage such percentage is not to exceed that fixed by the authorized scale.

The fourth and last Bill is one relating to an entirely different subject. Its purpose is to shorten, in certain cases, the periods of limitation of actions. In 1874 your Lordships passed a measure which made a considerable change in the periods of limitation with respect to actions for the recovery of land. Up to that time the limitation of time for the recovery of land was 20 years, or, where the person entitled to recover the land was under any disability when his right first accrued, 10 years after the termination of the disability. In place of that, it was fixed at 12 years and six years. I do not wish to shorten those terms any further; but I now propose to make similar alterations in other cases. I propose to reduce the period of limitation in the case of claims against administrators in respect of intestate estates from 20 years to 12; and in the case of specialty debts—such as actions arising upon instruments under seal—also from 20 years to 12. I also propose a change as to simple contract debts. It is a strange thing, but six years has been the limit with respect to simple contract debts since the reign of James I., and it has never been proposed to alter it. A great deal has happened since that time. There are greater facilities of communication, and also for the recovery of debts by legal proceedings; and I propose, therefore, that that limitation shall be reduced to three years. There are other provisions with respect to frauds, acknowledgments, and other like questions with which I need not detain your Lordships. These are the measures I have to lay before your Lordships, and I hope you will give them a first reading. If so, I propose to fix the second reading of the first two on Thursday week, and of the other two on this day fortnight.

Bill for facilitating sales, leases, and other dispositions of settled land, and for promoting the execution of improvements thereon.

Bill for simplifying and improving the practice of conveyancing, and for vesting in trustees, mortgagees, and others, various powers commonly conferred by provisions inserted in settlements, mortgagees, wills, and other instruments; and for amending in various particulars the law of property; and for other purposes.

Bill for making better provision respecting the remuneration of solicitors in conveyancing, and other non-contentious business: And

Bill for amending the law relating to the limitation of actions. — *Presented* (The LORD CHANCELLOR.)

LORD SELBORNE said, that even a less clear and able speaker than the noble and learned Earl could hardly have failed to impart interest to a subject of such great importance to many of their Lordships, and he did not think that a more interesting statement could have been made than that they had just listened to. If there were any matters connected with the Law of Settlement which required attention on economical grounds, they might expect to hear of them in the Report of the Royal Commission which was appointed last year; and he would touch upon the point only so far as to say that he concurred with the noble and learned Earl in thinking that it would require very great consideration on the part of their Lordships before they adopted any of the Continental principles prohibiting those arrangements of property, which, in this country, were called limitations, and on the Continent substitutions; or of cutting down estates by some rule of great simplicity, and altering the power of disposition of property by deed or will, which owners of property now possessed, or materially encroaching upon it. It would require great consideration before any measures of that kind could be adopted; and it was not wise or prudent to indulge in vague generalities on such a subject until the particulars of a measure were before them. On the other hand, there appeared to him to be no necessary presumption against some revision of the existing law, and some consideration whether, either as to real or personal estate, some alteration might be for the public advantage in the direction pointed out by the noble and learned Earl. This was entirely a practical subject, not dependent upon abstract disquisitions, but upon the experience of the country and the interests of owners of both descriptions of property. He had no hesitation in saying that the measures proposed appeared to him to be extremely well adapted to meet and remedy a great number of practical inconveniences in which the public, as well as particular owners of property were interested, arising out of the imperfect state of the present law as to the disposition of land by will and by lease, and the forms of conveyance. Subject to the examination of particular clauses, the plan of the Bill appeared to him to be one likely to commend itself to the judgment of their Lordships; and he was confirmed in that opinion by what was stated as to the assistance obtained and the care taken in the preparation of the measure. As no reference was made to sales and leases by charity and other Corporations, he supposed the Bill made no change in the law on the subject; but the noble and learned Earl might find it desirable to consider whether the law was entirely what it ought to be. Some provisions of the Bill appeared to him to be quite as fit to be applied to Corporations as to private persons. The giving of the powers mentioned to owners of life estates, and especially the power of sale, appeared to him to be the right thing to do, and the proposed way of doing it was, in the main, correct; but what was to be done with life estates that were incumbered with rent-charges and mortgages? He gathered from what had been stated that the mortgagor would have the power of making leases. It would be important to know whether under a mortgage the power of sale would be exerciseable; and, if so, whether it would be under the same conditions as in other cases. Some practical men well acquainted with the subject considered that much greater impediments were thrown in the way of the sale of lands in which the public had an interest by mortgages than by settlements. If, as he understood, a difference was proposed to be made in the powers given under existing settlements and under future settlements, he would be glad if the noble and learned Earl should re-consider that point, as he thought it would be very undesirable to postpone the benefit of such a measure by excluding all existing titles. These subjects had been considered by him; and the result of his deliberations was that if these powers would be of great advantage to owners of life estates they should not be postponed to an indefinite period, but be applied to existing settlements. As to the second Bill, he thought the changes would be advantageous; but he would not exclude the covenants in regard to the cultivation of land as they were of force now, and not of much practical value. In regard to the limitations of actions, he entirely agreed with the noble and learned Earl. As regarded the question of solicitors' costs, as something was proposed to be done by an external authority, it would be impossible now to express an opinion upon the subject. He must express his great satisfaction with the Bills considered as a whole; and he thanked the noble and learned Earl for the time and attention which he had given to them.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR said, he was very glad that the proposal of the Government had met with the approval of his noble and learned Friend; but there was one point on which he appeared to be labouring under a misconception, and that was with regard to the powers proposed to be given under existing settlements. He quite agreed with his noble and learned Friend that if the powers proposed to be conferred by the Bill were good it would be very much to be regretted if they were not communicated to those holding under existing settlements; because a great portion of the land of this country was held under existing settlements, and much of it could not come under new settlements for many years. But the fact was, that under the Bill, tenant for life under an existing settlement would have exactly the same power as the tenant for life under a future settlement. The difference between the two was not in the powers, but in the checks on the exercise of the powers. The tenant for life under an existing settlement, when he wished to exercise the powers conferred by the Bill, would have to apply, by summary proceeding, to the Court, and to obtain the consent of the Court. In that case, if the Court considered it desirable that any person in remainder should be heard he might be heard. But the tenant for life under future a settlement would only have to inform the trustees, and if they consented he might exercise the powers given by the Bill. With regard to life estates incumbered with mortgages, it was perfectly true that the Bill conferred on tenants for life no power to sell such estates discharged from the incumbrancer; but he was afraid he could not put the owner of an incumbered life estate in any better position in this respect, than an owner of an incumbered estate in fee. With regard to incumbrances on the inheritance, what the Bill proposed was that such incumbrances might be paid out of sale monies; but there was a provision that the tenant for life might agree with an incumbrancer to charge the incumbrance on another part of the land; and if the incumbrancer was a reasonable man, and saw that what was going to be done would improve the estate, and would not injure his claim, he might agree to what was proposed. If neither of these courses was adopted, the only course would be to sell the estate subject to the incumbrance; and so in a case where a life estate was incumbered the only course would be to transfer the incumbrance to another part of the estate to provide for the payment of the incumbrance, and of the portion of the purchase money attributable to the life estate, or to sell subject to the incumbrance; but he did not see what else could be done. With respect to lands in the hands of charity trustees, he quite agreed with his noble and learned Friend that the law was not in a satisfactory condition; but this was a Bill which related to settled land, and anything done with regard to the other matter must be done in another way.

Bills read 1^a; and to be *printed.* (Nos. 14, 15, 16, and 17.)

SEEDS (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 10.)

(*The Lord President.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee, read.

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee upon the said Bill."—(*The Lord President.*)

THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE inquired why the valuation limit of £10 had been raised to £15, so that a farmer whose valuation exceeded the latter amount would be debarred from participating in the assistance received by his neighbours?

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND AND GORDON said, it was necessary to have a limit. In the first instance it was restricted to £10; but after full discussion in the House of Commons it was raised to £15.

Motion *agreed to;* House in Committee accordingly.

Amendments made; the Report thereof to be received *To-morrow;* and Bill to be *printed* as amended. (No. 18.)

House adjourned at Seven o'clock,
till To-morrow, half past
Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 23rd February, 1880.

MINUTES.]—SELECT COMMITTEE—Loans for Local Works, *appointed.*

SUPPLY—*considered in Committee*—CIVIL SERVICE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1879-80, Classes I. and II.

PRIVATE BILL (*by Order*) — *Second Reading*— Stafford Borough*.

PUBLIC BILLS — *Ordered* — *First Reading* — Census* [85]; Census (Scotland) * [86].

Second Reading—Indian Salaries and Allowances* [72].

Second Reading—Referred to Select Committee— Criminal Code [2].

Select Committee—Bankruptcy Law Amendment* [3], *appointed* and *nominated.*

Considered as amended—Ancient Monuments [51].

Considered as amended—Third Reading—Relief of Distress (Ireland) [84], and *passed.*

NOTICE OF MOTION.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (ORDER IN DEBATE).

NOTICE OF RESOLUTIONS.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER gave Notice that on Thursday next he would move the following Resolutions:—

"(1.) That, whenever any Member shall have been named by the Speaker, or by the Chairman of a Committee of the whole House, as disregarding the authority of the Chair, or abusing the Rules of the House by persistently and wilfully obstructing the business of the House, or otherwise, then, if the offence has been committed in the House, the Speaker shall forthwith put the question, on a Motion being made, no amendment, adjournment, or debate being allowed, 'That such Member be suspended from the service of the House during the remainder of that day's sitting;' and, if the offence has been committed in a Committee of the whole House, the Chairman shall, on a Motion being made, put the same question in a similar way, and if the Motion is carried shall forthwith suspend the proceedings of the Committee and report the circumstance to the House; and the Speaker shall thereupon put the same question, without amendment, adjournment, or debate, as if the offence had been committed in the House itself. If any Member be suspended three times in one Session, under this Order, his suspension on the third occasion shall continue for one week, and until a Motion has been made, upon which it shall be decided, at one sitting, by the House, whether the suspension shall then cease, or for what longer period it shall continue; and, on the occasion of such Motion, the Member may, if he desires it, be heard in his place.

"(2.) That this be a Standing Order of the House."

He would also move that the Orders of the Day be postponed in order that these Resolutions might be taken.

QUESTIONS.

WATER SUPPLY (METROPOLIS).

MR. FAWCETT asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If he can inform the House when the Bill relating to the Water Supply of London will be introduced?

MR. ASSHETON CROSS: Sir, I had hoped to be able to give a definite answer to the hon. Member's Question, but the arrangements are not yet completed. When they are, I propose to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to give me a day for the introduction of the Bill.

MR. FAWCETT asked, Whether, considering the great pecuniary interests involved, and the speculations that were taking place in shares, the right hon. Gentleman would so make his arrangements as to prevent some people from obtaining information before others, and whether he would cause the Bill to be ready for circulation immediately after it was printed?

MR. ASSHETON CROSS: Sir, I have already arranged with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that, whatever day he may allow me for the introduction of the Bill, it shall be in the hands of Members.

WATER SUPPLY (ENGLAND AND WALES).

MR. MONK (for Mr. ROWLEY HILL) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether, in view of applications from various districts to take water for their own purposes from water sheds with which they have no natural connection, the Government are prepared, in anticipation of legislation upon the subject, to initiate an inquiry into the whole question of water supply?

MR. SCLATER-BOOTH: Sir, the question whether there shall be an Inquiry into the water supply of the Kingdom has been several times under the attention of the Government; but at present there seems to be no occasion for a special Inquiry, seeing there is already ample information at their disposal, should they think fit to introduce legislation on the subject.

RAILWAYS AND CANALS—THROUGH RATES.

MR. ARTHUR PEEL asked the President of the Board of Trade, What steps the Board have taken in the case of the Warwick and Birmingham and Warwick and Napton Canal Companies and the London and North Western Railway and Birmingham Canal Companies; and whether he proposes to deal with the relation between the canals and the Company; and, if so, whether by a special or general measure?

VISCOUNT SANDON: Sir, the subject raised by the hon. Gentleman's Question excites very great interest among the trading community, and, in dealing with this case and with similar ones, I feel bound to bear constantly in mind the strong opinion expressed by the important joint Committee of the two Houses of Parliament in 1872, in favour of maintaining the competition between the canals and the railways. To make my reply intelligible, I must mention that the Warwick Canal Company instituted proceedings before the Railway Commissioners against the London and North Western Railway Company for through rates over the Birmingham Canal, which is in the hands of the London and North Western Railway, that the Commissioners made an Order in favour of such through rates, but that this Order was quashed by the Court of Exchequer on the ground that it was in excess of the Commissioners' jurisdiction. The Act under which the management of the Birmingham Canal is vested in the London and North Western Railway Company provides—

> "That if it appears to the Board of Trade to be necessary for the interests of the public, they may require the Company to remedy any specified inconvenience or evils either by introducing a Bill or otherwise, and upon the failure of the said Company to comply with the requisition, may introduce a Bill themselves at the expense of the said Company."

The Warwick Canal Company appealed to me to act under that section. I consequently communicated with the Railway Company and with the Birmingham Canal Company; but those Companies declined to give me any reply on the merits of the case, on the ground that an appeal from the decision of the Court of Exchequer was still pending. I also thought it undesirable, while an appeal was pending, to take any decisive action. I am now, however, informed that the notice of appeal will be withdrawn, and I trust I shall receive very shortly from the Railway Company a reply showing that they intend to take such steps as may render action on my part unnecessary. Until I receive those replies, I think the hon. Gentleman will feel that it would be premature for me to say what course the Government will pursue. But I am fully aware of the importance of the case, and as soon as I receive the replies from the Railway Companies, and have had time to consider them, I shall be prepared to announce the course that we shall think it right to take in this serious matter.

TREATY OF BERLIN—ARTICLE 44—ROUMANIA.

MR. SERJEANT SIMON asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government and of the Governments of France and Germany soon to recognise, or whether they have recognised, the independence of Roumania; if so, whether and how the stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin are to be carried out, requiring, as a condition precedent to such recognition, that all Roumanian subjects shall, without regard to race or religious profession, be placed upon equal footing in respect of civil and political rights; whether it is the fact that out of a Jewish population of about 250,000, of whom about 200,000 are natives, a vast number being descendants of those who settled in the country four centuries ago, the Act of Emancipation passed by the Roumanian Legislature as a fulfilment of the Berlin Treaty, restricts emancipation to individual applications in categories numbering altogether not more than 1,500 or 2,000, while it leaves the rest as hitherto, without civil rights, and, in defiance of public law, aliens in the land of their birth, and that being Jews, without a country of their own according to Roumanian law judicially declared, without even the protection extended by civilized nations to other aliens; whether Her Majesty's Government will accept, or have accepted, such a measure as a fulfilment of the stipulations of the Berlin Treaty; or, whether they have required and have received assurances from the Roumanian Government that they will extend emancipation to the rest of the Jewish subjects?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, the Roumanian Legislature have made a change in the Constitution of their country, in conformity with the 44th Article of the Treaty of Berlin. In fact, they have imported into their Constitution substantially the language of the Treaty. The three Powers have, therefore, in pursuance of the Treaty, recognized the independence of Roumania. We trust that in future the change that has been made in the Constitution in favour of religious freedom will be executed in a loyal and liberal spirit, and we have received assurances from the Roumanian Government which we think justify the anticipation. Papers will shortly be presented on the subject.

CRIMINAL LAW—EXECUTION AT MANCHESTER.

MR. PEASE asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the information contained in the public press relative to the execution of William Cassidy at Manchester on the 17th instant; whether it is true that the Deputy Governor of the jail stated the drop then used to have been "eight or nine feet in height," and admitted, when interrogated by a juror, "that it might have been nine feet six inches in height," and that a juror remarked in reference to the corpse of the criminal, "his head is nearly off his body;" whether, if such a statement is true, he will take such steps as would stop such a mode of execution in the future; and, whether he will object to lay upon the Table of the House the regulations now in force in the jails under the care of the Home Department having reference to executions, including, also, the existing regulations as to the admission of reporters to the public press on these occasions?

MR. ASSHETON CROSS, in reply, said, that he had communicated with the Governor of Cheetham Gaol with respect to the execution of William Cassidy, and had received a reply from him. It was not true that he had admitted that the drop was 9 feet 6 inches and he was not at the inquest in a position to correct the statement of a juror that it was between 8 feet and 9 feet. On his return to the gaol he had it measured. It was found to be 8 feet 5 inches. The death was instantaneous, and there was nothing to show any undue violence. The regulations now in force were those issued by the Secretary of State in 1868, under the Private Executions Act, but they did not affect the manner in which the sentence was to be executed. That had been left from time immemorial to the High Sheriff, and the Home Office had never interfered; but if any abuse occurred, he would be the first to do so. He could not add anything to what he had stated on Friday, that he would put himself in communication with the local authorities, and see what could be done with regard to the admission of the Press, or some representatives on behalf of the public; but amongst the evils complained of under the former system were the reports of the executions in the papers.

LANDLORD AND TENANT (IRELAND) —NOTICE TO QUIT.

THE O'DONOGHUE asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, If his attention has been called to a statement in the "Kerry Sentinel" of Tuesday, February the 10th, that Mr. Daniel M'Mahon, a tenant on what is known in Kerry as the Ballysuchy Estate, has been served with notice to quit; and, if he will ascertain whether Mr. M'Mahon, before receiving notice to quit, had objected to being made liable to 3½ per cent. interest on money proposed to be expended by the agent of the said Ballysuchy Estate in fencing a portion of Mr. M'Mahon's farm?

MR. J. LOWTHER: Sir, the paper from which the extract referred to by the hon. Gentleman is taken is not known in Dublin, and no such paper appears on the ordinary lists; and, further, I must say that the Government has no control in the matter. However, I received to-day a letter from the agent referred to, Mr. Hussey, a gentleman very well known and much respected in Ireland. He says that he has noticed this Question, and he thinks it right to inform me that the facts of the case were that the tenant in question was asked to pay a reasonable interest upon the proportion of the money lent to be expended on the farm, which, instead of being 3½ per cent, was rather under than over the common interest, including sinking fund under the new terms. The reason, however, that the tenant got notice to quit was because he threw obstacles in the way of an important improvement which was required for the protection of other holdings. As I have already said, the Government has neither the power nor the inclination to interfere in the relations between the landlord and tenant.

CONGRESS OF BERLIN—PROTOCOL 18 —OTTOMAN BONDHOLDERS.

MR. RYLANDS (for Mr. E. JENKINS) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether any steps have been taken by Her Majesty's Government in conformity with the declaration in the 18th protocol of the Berlin Congress (Turkey, No. 39, 1878), that—

> "The Powers represented at the Congress desire to recommend to the Sublime Porte the establishment at Constantinople of a Financial Commission composed of specialists named by their respective Governments, which Commission shall be charged to examine into the complaints of the bondholders of the Ottoman debts, and to propose the most efficacious means for satisfying them as far as is compatible with the financial situation of the Porte;"

whether the French Government has taken, or proposed to Her Majesty's Government to take, any action in the matter; and, what steps Her Majesty's Government propose to take?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, no steps have been taken in the direction suggested by the hon. Member as yet. No representations on the subject have been received from the French Government. Her Majesty's Government are not able to say what course they may adopt until they are informed of the opinion and course of action that may be taken by other Powers.

IMPRISONMENT FOR DEBT— LEGISLATION.

MR. ANDERSON asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If his attention has been called to a Return just delivered, relating to Holloway Prison, from which it appears that, out of about 900 committals for the year 1878, nearly 500 were simply for "non-payment;" and if Her Majesty's Government will legislate to remove the anomaly that, under a fiction of law, imprisonment for non-payment of small debts largely continues, while imprisonment for debts over £50 has been abolished?

MR. ASSHETON CROSS: Sir, I hope the House will excuse me from entering into a matter of this kind in answer to a Question. It is a large subject, and I cannot make my views intelligible in merely answering a Question. I am bound, however, to state that my opinions on this matter have undergone considerable change since the Committee sat some time ago.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS— LEGISLATION.

MR. RICHARD asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If he can now inform the House whether the Government intend to take any action on the Report of the Commissioners on Municipal Corporations?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, in reply, said, that the Report had only just been received, but that the evidence on which it was founded had not been received, so that he could not now answer the Question.

MINES ACT, 1872—EMPLOYMENT OF BOYS IN MINES.

Mr. MACDONALD asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, considering that evidence had been laid before him that two boys of tender age had been worked for some months in the Pencaitland Colliery, East Lothian, N.B., by the employers or owners of the colliery for eighty-four hours each week, making thirty hours more in the seven days than is allowed by the sixth section of "The Mines Act, 1872," he has directed that the owners and manager shall be prosecuted for such an offence?

Mr. ASSHETON CROSS: Sir, I decline to commit myself on the subject of hours, as I am not certain about the facts. The Inspectors very properly asked leave to prosecute, and leave has been given.

COAL MINES—THE LYCETT COLLIERY EXPLOSION.

Mr. MACDONALD asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If he will cause to be published with the Report of the investigation now being made into the cause of the Lycett Colliery Explosion, whereby sixty-two persons lost their lives, a supplemental official Report of the proceedings before the Coroner's Inquest and the proceedings before the Magistrates in respect to a serious explosion which took place in the same colliery a few months before?

Mr. ASSHETON CROSS, in reply, said, he had no objection to produce the Report of the proceedings before the Coroner; but he knew nothing of what took place before the Magistrates.

POST OFFICE—PRIVATE TELEGRAPH WIRES.

Mr. GRAY asked the Postmaster General, Whether communications sent through private telegraph wires rented to individuals by Government are ever "tapped" en route by Government officials without the knowledge or consent of the parties to whom the wires are rented?

Lord JOHN MANNERS: Sir, in answer to the hon. Gentleman, I have to say that all wires, whether private or public, are necessarily, from time to time, examined in order to see that they are in proper order and that the work on them is properly done. That examination takes place without any previous knowledge on the part of the renters or of others interested.

Mr. GRAY: May I ask the noble Lord, Whether that examination involves a knowledge of the communications sent across the wires, and whether it occurs at times when communications are being sent by the wires, so that they may be known to the officials of the Government without the knowledge of those renting the wires?

Lord JOHN MANNERS: As the hon. Gentleman is probably aware every telegram is stored at the Central Office for a space of three months, in order that when any complaints are made the telegrams may be inspected, therefore there is no necessity for the practice suggested by the hon. Gentleman, and of which I have no knowledge whatever.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (IRELAND).

Mr. GRAY asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Whether, in view of the great increase of work thrown upon the Irish Local Government Board owing to the distress in Ireland, it is the intention of Government promptly to fill the vacancy upon the Board; and, if so, whether it is intended to appoint a gentleman with previous knowledge of the work of the Department?

Mr. J. LOWTHER: Sir, the question of permanently filling up the vacancy in the Local Government Board in Ireland has not been formally decided. Arrangements, however, are in course of being carried out with the object of temporarily strengthening the Board, and I am in hopes that the services of a gentleman of extensive experience in the administration of the Poor Law may be secured for that purpose.

PRISON (IRELAND) ACT—INFIRMARY AND GAOL SURGEONS.

Mr. ERRINGTON asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Whether any Scheme has as yet been adopted settling the salaries, duties, and position of the infirmary and gaol surgeons in Ireland; and, if so, whether such Scheme will be laid upon the Table?

MR. J. LOWTHER: Sir, such a scheme as that referred to in the hon. Gentleman's Question has been prepared, and I shall have no objection to lay it on the Table so far as it has reference to the surgeons of infirmaries.

APPOINTMENT OF THE REGISTRAR GENERAL—DR. FARR.

MR. LYON PLAYFAIR asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether the eminent and long-continued services of Dr. Farr, who, since 1838, has added so much to our knowledge of vital statistics and public health by his work in the Registrar General's Office, have received, since his resignation, any public recognition from Her Majesty's Government, either in the form of increased pension or otherwise?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, the formal steps after Dr. Farr's resignation and the consideration of his superannuation have not taken place very long. It is always necessary in cases where application for superannuation is made that the case should be carefully examined by the Superannuation Committee at the Treasury, especially if any question arises as to special pension. The question of a special pension, such as can be granted by the Lords of the Treasury under a clause in the Superannuation Act, is very difficult indeed to deal with, and requires exceeding care. There has therefore been some delay in considering this case; but after carefully examining the circumstances, this is the decision at which the Treasury have arrived—

> "My Lords, in order to mark their appreciation of Dr. Farr's long and able services in the Registrar General's Department, have awarded him a special pension of £800 a-year;"

which is the full salary of his office, less the addition thereto which was personal to himself, and which will not be paid to another person holding the same office.

CITY OF LONDON—GRATUITIES TO OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION.

MR. W. H. JAMES asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the Report and Evidence of the Special Inquiry Committee of the Court of Common Council of the City of London in reference to the practice of long standing of gratuities, commissions, or discounts being received by certain officers of the Corporation, and regarding the habitual breach of Standing Order No 67, which rules that no member of the Court of Common Council, or his partner, or other person on his behalf, shall be a contractor for or shall be employed directly or indirectly in any work to be performed in his business or profession, for or against the City or any of its Committees; and, whether he has consulted the Law Officers of the Crown on these matters, and with what result?

MR. ASSHETON CROSS, in reply, said, he was informed by the City Remembrancer that certain officers of the Corporation had been in the habit of receiving gratuities and commissions, but the Court of Common Council had called upon the chief persons implicated for an explanation. While emphatically condemning the malpractices in question, the Corporation were of opinion that they had dealt with the matter in the manner which, in regard to all the circumstances of the case, seemed to them to be the most expedient. With regard to any breach of the standing regulations of the Court of Common Council, the City Remembrancer said the matter was one with which the Common Council themselves were fully competent to deal.

RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND).

MR. MITCHELL HENRY asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Whether he has been informed by the Poor Law Inspector serving in the West of Ireland that, owing to the deficiency in the means of transport, there is much difficulty in getting supplies to some of the remote districts; and, especially, whether he is aware that a cargo of meal for Ballinabrill district, which left Galway more than four weeks ago, is still detained in Roundstone Bay by stress of weather; and, under these circumstances, whether application has been made to the Admiralty for the services of a gunboat?

MR. J. LOWTHER: Sir, the facts are substantially as indicated by the hon. Gentleman in the first part of his Question, but I understand that the boat referred to was conveying food for the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund and not for the Poor Law authorities. It was delayed by stress of weather, but I am glad to say now that an additional gunboat has been lent by the Admiralty for purposes of transport.

Mr. GRAY: Sir, might I ask the right hon. Gentleman, Whether he is quite certain that the gunboat was sent exclusively for the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund, and what was the name of the gunboat?

Mr. J. LOWTHER: Sir, the name of it was the *Goshawk.* If the hon. Gentleman gathered from my Answer that it was exclusively sent for the purpose of conveying the stores furnished from the fund of the Duchess of Marlborough, it is not what I intended to convey. I said that the cargo of meal referred to in the Question of the hon. Member for Galway was, I had been informed, supplied from the Duchess of Marlborough's Fund.

SOUTH AFRICA—BASUTOLAND.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether it is true as stated in the "Times" of February 20th, that the disarmament of the Basutos is at once to be proceeded with, or whether time will be given to Letsen, the paramount chief, to petition the Cape Parliament and Her Majesty?

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: Sir, I have received no confirmation of the telegram referred to in the Question of the hon. Gentleman. The latest official information which has reached me with reference to the disarmament of the Basutos is contained in a Minute of the Cape Government which was read a few days ago in "another place" by my noble Friend the Under Secretary for the Colonies, and will be included in the South African Papers which will, I hope, be in the hands of hon. Members in the course of this week. I have impressed on the Cape Government, with whom the responsibility for dealing with this question rests, Basutoland having been since 1871 included in the Cape Colony, the desirability of proceeding with great caution in it. I do not doubt that they will do so; and from what I have heard I think it by no means improbable that the Basutos will surrender their arms voluntarily, without the necessity of any Proclamation under the Act of 1878.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Colonial Secretary at the Cape has stated to Letsen that the Queen and English people approve and desire the disarmament?

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I do not remember hearing any confirmation of that statement.

NAVY—H.M.S. "WIVERN."

Captain PIM asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether H.M.S. ironclad "Wivern," ordered to China, is of a similar type to the "Neptune," late "Independencia," viz. a vessel with a poop and forecastle, and fitted with two turrets; whether H.M.S. "Wivern" is not comparatively for her size a more strongly built vessel than the "Neptune," late "Independencia," which broke her back in launching; whether the "Wivern's" armour is not equivalent to that of the "Huascar," and her armament more powerful; whether it was ever suggested to or in contemplation by the Admiralty to send out torpedo boats on the upper deck of the "Wivern;" and, whether the "Wivern" is not a safe and efficient vessel for such services as she was designed for?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: Sir, the *Wivern* has, like the *Neptune*, two turrets and a poop and forecastle, but there does not appear to be any other similarity between them. The *Wivern* is not considered to be, comparatively for her size, a more strongly built vessel than the *Neptune.* The fact that the *Neptune* was injured in launching is not considered to afford any evidence that she is not a strongly built ship. The *Wivern's* armour is at least equivalent to that of the *Huascar*, and her armament is more powerful, having two turrets instead of one. It was at one time suggested to the Admiralty to send out two second-class torpedo doats in the *Wivern* to Hong Kong, not on the upper deck, but at the height of the hurricane deck. It is not considered that the safety of the ship would have been endangered, but it has been thought more desirable to send them out in another vessel. Considerable improvements have been effected in the *Wivern*, and she is regarded as a safe and efficient vessel for the services for which she is designed.

ARMY—SOUTH AFRICA—ALLEGED MISCONDUCT OF TROOPS.

Mr. WHITWELL asked the Secretary of State for War, with reference to the statements of Dr. Russell that irregularities among the troops in South Africa occurred before Sir Garnet Wolseley took the command and of which his expected Report can give no personal information, Whether the War Office has received Reports of the conduct of the 2nd Division of the South African Army; and, if so, he will lay such Reports upon the Table of the House, and also the Reports of the Generals commanding the different divisions in Natal and in the Zulu war so far as they refer to the conduct of the men under their respective commands?

COLONEL STANLEY: Sir, to the best of my knowledge, no special Reports on the conduct of the troops in South Africa were received from Lord Chelmsford or the divisional commanders before Sir Garnet Wolseley took command; but on the publication of the letter of Dr. Russell in *The Daily Telegraph* on the 11th instant, General Newdigate wrote to the Adjutant General upon this subject. His letter was forwarded to Lord Chelmsford, under whom he had been serving, who returned it to the Adjutant General with a covering letter. Both these I have agreed to give as an unopposed Return to my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Brighton (General Shute). Of course, it will be borne in mind that the Report of Sir Garnet Wolseley was written in reply, not to the letters in *The Daily Telegraph* of this month, but in reply to that of October 10, published November 27.

TURKEY—MURDER OF MR. OGLE.

MR. H. SAMUELSON asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether the Consul General at Salonica, until the arrival of whose final Report upon the possibility of holding a new investigation into Mr. Ogle's murder Her Majesty's Government is postponing any further endeavour to discover the authors of the crime, is the same gentleman who conducted the first abortive inquiry into the circumstances of the murder in 1878?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, in reply, said, the gentleman who conducted the Inquiry in 1878, into Mr. Ogle's death, was Mr. Fawcett, Her Majesty's Consul General and Judge at Constantinople. Mr. Blunt, the Consul General at Salonica, was at Volo at the time, and was originally instructed to make the Inquiry; but as he had a political mission to fulfil, to arrange terms between the Ottoman authorities and the insurgent Chiefs, he suggested that one of the legal Vice Consuls at Constantinople should be sent to carry on the examinations.

GREECE—CAPTURE OF COLONEL AND MRS SYNGE BY BRIGANDS.

MR. H. SAMUELSON asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If he has any information respecting an outrage on Colonel and Mrs. Synge near Salonica, and whether the perpetrators of the outrage were Greek subjects or subjects of the Porte; and, if they were Greek subjects, whether he could explain the existence of armed Greek bands within 100 miles of the Turkish frontier?

MR. BOURKE: Sir, I did not know that the hon. Gentleman was going to ask the Question. If he will give Notice of his Question I will endeavour to answer it.

MR. H. SAMUELSON said, he would ask the Question to-morrow.

MOTIONS.

PARLIAMEMT — PRIVILEGE — INTERFERENCE OF PEERS IN ELECTIONS —HON. MAJOR JOCELYN.

RESOLUTION.

MR. SULLIVAN: Sir, I have to ask the attention of the House for a few moments while I bring before it a question of Privilege. I have to mention that, undeterred by the proceedings of this House on Friday, certain public journals of this country, not having the fear of punishment by Resolution before their eyes, have committed several Breaches of Privilege, some of which it will be my duty to bring before you. I have, however, first to deal with a much graver question, and one of a much rarer character with regard to the Privileges of the House. On the first day of the Session it has been customary, I suppose for 200 years, to pass a Resolution declaring it to be a high infringement of the liberties and Privileges of the Commons for any Lord or other Peer, not being a Peer of Ireland, to concern himself in the election of Members of Parliament, or for any Lord Lieutenant to avail himself of any authority derived from his commission to influence electors. At all times the House of Commons has been exceedingly jealous of the interference of Peers in this matter, and with very good reason, too. Peers of the Realm have their own Chamber, where they can sit and enjoy Privileges not granted to us. We are only descended from a second Adam; but upon them, by a miraculous interposition of Divine Providence, hereditary wisdom has descended. Now I find that the annual general meeting of the Borough of Chelsea Conservative Association was held this day week at 25, Gloucester-road, South Kensington, and the right hon. Earl Cadogan occupied the chair. The noble Earl is not only a Peer of the Realm, who might content himself with the privileges he enjoys, but, if I mistake not, he is an Official Member of the Government, and I trust the Leader of this House will show to-night that he is as anxious to defend this Assembly from the interference of Members of his own Party as from that of any Commoner who may happen to sit on this side of the House. Now I will read to the House some of the remarks of Lord Cadogan; and I think I shall be able to show not only that his Lordship interfered, but interfered in the strongest manner, with the electoral proceedings of the borough in which he and his family have potential influence—["Oh!"]—well, then, in the borough in which he and his family have very slight influence. His Lordship is reported in the public newspapers to have said that—

> "One of the largest and most Radical boroughs in this country had just elected a second Conservative candidate."

[*Cheers.*] It was just at that point that the applause, it appears, had commenced at that meeting. The noble Earl went on to say that he had every hope that the efforts which the Association were making on the evening in question in Chelsea would have the same success. Now, that is the way in which a Member of the Government, who is also a Member of the other House of Parliament, thinks fit to occupy his time in working for the election of a Conservative candidate. The noble Lord further impressed upon his audience the expediency of doing all that they could to make their organization as perfect as possible, so that Lord Inverurie and Mr. Browne might be returned at the head of the poll. I know it may be said that Lord Cadogan had not been using his influence with the electors after the writ had been issued, or while the election was proceeding; but, to borrow an analogy from recent occurrences at St. Petersburg, I cannot see how it can be fairly contended that a man who is preparing the electoral mine is not interfering with election matters in the borough of Chelsea. [*Cries of* "Rosebery!"] In answer to the challenge of hon. Gentlemen opposite, I can only say that I am perfectly ready to tackle any Peer of the Realm who may be offending against the Privileges of this House. But to return to Earl Cadogan. After that noble Lord had set at defiance the Rule of the House which I have just read, the Hon. Major Jocelyn appeared upon the scene, and I have to ask that he shall be brought to the Bar in company with the noble Lord and some newspaper publishers whom I shall name presently. The newspaper report of Major Jocelyn's speech was not very full; but, assuming the House to grant me a Committee, as is usual, I shall be able to satisfy them that the unreported portions of his speech even more grievously offend against the Privileges of Parliament than those I am about to read. He made reference to the vote which the hon. Baronet the Member for Chelsea (Sir Charles W. Dilke) gave on the Amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) to the Address, and he denounced—for that is the word—the action of the hon. Baronet in joining in an unholy alliance and giving his vote to a "despicable lot of Irish rebels." Where, now, is the placard of the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll)? Where is the indignation of the hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Onslow)? I now invite the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who glowed with righteous indignation because two of his own supporters had been called "inhuman," and their conduct in one sense "degrading," to show us to-night—if perfect freedom be allowed to his own sense of justice—that he can rise above considerations of Party and vindicate the character and reputation of Members against language so vile and scandalous as that attributed to the Hon. Major Jocelyn at this Conservative meeting. I think it will be admitted that this is a gross Breach of

Privilege, and therefore I move that Earl Cadogan and the Hon. Major Jocelyn be summoned to appear at the Bar of this House this day week, when, having heard what they may have to say, it may or may not be the duty of this House to appoint a Committee. Before the Committee I now publicly undertake to lay all necessary evidence of the utterance of the speech of Major Jocelyn applying to the hon. Member for Chelsea. I apologise to the House for having taken up its time, but if we have drawn the sword of Privilege, let it be held with a firm hand. Let it not be used against one political Party only, but let it descend upon Commoner and Peer, Liberal and Tory alike. I beg to move that the language I have read constitutes a breach of the Privileges of this House, and that Earl Cadogan and the Hon. Major Jocelyn be summoned to the bar of this House to offer such explanation as they may be able.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the language of Major Jocelyn complained of to this House is a Breach of Privilege, and that the conduct of the Earl Cadogan as complained of to the House is also a Breach of the Privileges of this House."—(*Mr. Sullivan.*)

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE: I do not know, Sir, whether I have any right to defend my noble Friend Lord Cadogan against the attacks of the hon. and learned Member for Louth (Mr. Sullivan); but if I may be permitted to do so, I may point out that the term during which Peers may not interfere at elections is always held to commence with the issuing of the writ; and I certainly do not complain of the noble Lord taking any part in political matters in my borough up till that time, and I have no doubt that he knows his duty too well as a Peer of this Realm to take any part after that time. With regard to the language of Major Jocelyn, on which my hon. and learned Friend has moved that it is a Breach of the Privilege, I perhaps may be allowed to say that I have nothing to do with this Motion. At the same time, it is perfectly clear that the language used was a Breach of Privilege in accordance with the ruling of the Chancellor of the Exchequer two days ago. I look upon the speech in question as being rather a vulgar speech, and as one which may be passed over without any notice on the part of the House, or, indeed, from myself. The vote which I gave on the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) to the Address was a vote in favour of the reform of the Irish Land Laws—a reform urgently needed—and I shall be prepared to defend my vote at the proper time and place. I consider that this matter is entirely undeserving of the attention of the House; but the Chancellor of the Exchequer appears to me to be responsible for the present proceedings, because the right hon. Gentleman, by the course he took on Friday night over the Privilege debate of the hon Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) undoubtedly paved the way for Motions of this kind being made whenever vulgar or objectionable language may be used in any part of the country with regard to Members of the House. If the question goes to a division, I shall vote in the same way in which I voted on Friday night. The language that has been quoted may be technically a Breach of Privilege, but I shall vote that it was not—so strongly am I of the opinion that no such question should be taken up by the House.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, I do not know that I entirely follow the hon. Baronet the Member for Chelsea (Sir Charles W. Dilke) when he says that certain language is shown to be a Breach of Privilege by my ruling on Friday night. I am not aware of having made any ruling on the subject. It is true there was a Motion before the House in accordance with Rules long laid down, and which, I believe, have been almost universally admitted in debate, certainly by the highest authorities. No question has been seriously raised, so far as I am aware, as to its being a Breach of Privilege for any person outside the House to comment on proceedings inside this House. We all know that such comments are made every day. We also know that for a number of years the House has not exercised its undoubted Privilege by complaining of frequent breaches of it. It is also true that, on Friday last, I thought it right to call upon the House to affirm that the particular conduct to which attention had been called by two of its Members amounted to a Breach of Privilege, and also was an interference with the discharge of their duties by hon. Members. I wish to remind the House that on that occasion two hon. Members appealed to the House to say whether certain conduct pursued by a Member who was in his place, and who avowed that he had pursued that conduct, and who justified his pursuing it, was or was not a Breach of Privilege; and it seemed to me impossible to allow a question like that to pass without the House giving some judgment on what had taken place. The appeal of the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) was one of a very peculiar character—it was an appeal made by a Member of this House with reference to Business which was proceeding in the House—and I think that is as widely distinct from the question that is raised now as any two cases can possibly be. With regard to this particular case, in the first place, we have nobody complaining. The hon. Baronet the Member for Chelsea has not complained of interference with his actions, and we have no evidence before us precisely as to what took place. As to the case of Lord Cadogan, it has been already pointed out that it is not held to be an interference of a Peer with an election if he takes part in political questions before a writ has been issued. I have not been exactly informed, but I believe that the meeting in question was not held with special reference to the candidature of any particular person for the borough of Chelsea, but was the ordinary annual meeting of a Conservative Association in Chelsea for the purpose of transacting its regular business and electing officers. Lord Rosebery [*Cheers and laughter*]—I really beg pardon of the House, but, talking of the interference of Peers with elections, Lord Rosebery's name slipped out entirely by accident. Lord Cadogan, I mean, was not taking any part in the coming election for the borough of Chelsea, and I think, under the circumstances, the House will see that we have no evidence before us to proceed in this case, and as for calling a Peer to the Bar of this House, it would be an extraordinary proceeding, and rather in excess of the powers of this House.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: Sir, I think that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has nobody but himself to thank for what has occurred. It was perfectly obvious that when the Government chose the other night to revive the question of Privilege, it would not end where it did. I am entirely against this Motion as I was against that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and before I sit down I shall move exactly the same Motion which I moved on that occasion—namely, the Previous Question, and for exactly the same reasons. I should like the House to consider the grounds on which the Chancellor of the Exchequer endeavours to distinguish this case from the other. He says the distinction rests, first of all, in the fact of certain Members having complained of offence and injury to themselves. I say that is no Parliamentary distinction. A Breach of Privilege is an offence against no individual, but against the House. Then the Chancellor of the Exchequer's excuse for not taking the same course as on Friday is equally untenable. The hon. Members who made the complaint withdrew it—and said that it was no longer a question between them and the hon. Member for Derby, that all offence against themselves was purged, and they left the question solely as one between the hon. Member and the House. The prosecutor on Friday night was not the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster (Sir Charles Russell) nor the hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Onslow), but he was the Leader of the House—who came forward when they had abandoned all complaint, and brought forward the question of Privilege on his own responsibility and in his own name. Then the Chancellor of the Exchequer says this case is to be distinguished because the hon. Member for Derby justified what he had stated. But the Motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was made after the justification had been withdrawn—after the most honourable *amende* had been made. And I say that for the Government to have proceeded after that, was vindictive and shabby. Well, I say there is no distinction between the two cases except that you, the majority, desire to proceed against a Member of the minority. ["Oh, oh!"] Ah, it is the fact; if not, are you prepared to vindicate the Breach of Privilege now? The Chancellor of the Exchequer tells you it is a Breach of Privilege, and I should like to ask the Attorney General the Question he put to me on Friday night. Is this a Breach of Privilege or is it not? If it is a Breach of Privilege then why are you not going to proceed against it? Does not this come within the terms of your Motion the other night, except that the language now in question is not put on a placard, but is printed in such a way that it may be read by millions instead of hundreds? "It is a proceeding denouncing the part taken by an hon. Member of the House; it is, therefore, calculated to interfere with the due discharge of the duty of a Member of this House, and is a Breach of Privilege." The Chancellor of the Exchequer told us the other night that when a circumstance of this kind is brought before the House, the House cannot escape from the duty of taking notice of it, and of recording its judgment. Now, I want to know what is the difference between a placard and a thing printed on a piece of paper and not stuck on a wall? There is no difference whatever; they are both denunciations of the vote of a Member of this House in connection with the current proceedings of this House. Cannot any man of common sense see that what has happened to-night is the necessary consequence of the proceedings of the Government the other night? Do not hon. Members know that there is not a day in which there are not Breaches of Privilege that may be brought forward every night, and that nobody ever took a course that was more calculated to be obstructive to Public Business than that adopted by the right hon. Gentleman on Friday night? I venture to say it was a Party Motion, and that it was voted on as such, and it was perfectly obvious that it would lead to recriminations of this description. The proceedings of Friday night were unwise and impolitic, and I ventured to invite the House not to entertain it. I have not changed my opinion. I think these Motions of Breach of Privilege apply to matters which you cannot restrain, and which, in my opinion, you ought not to wish to restrain, without serious injury to the character of the Parliament of this country. Therefore, for exactly the same reason that I moved the Previous Question on Friday night, I beg to move it on the present occasion.

Previous Question proposed, "That that Question be now put."—(*Sir William Harcourt.*)

MR. NEWDEGATE heartily concurred in the Motion of the hon. and learned Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt), regarding as frivolous the Motion of the hon. and learned Member for Louth (Mr. Sullivan), and as being widely distinct from that for which he had voted on Friday night. The House would permit him to point out what he conceived to be the difference between the two cases to which he referred. In the previous instance, the House had been appealed to by two hon. Members against a third hon. Member, who had equal opportunity of urging whatever he thought fit with respect to the particular Bill upon which the difference of opinion existed between himself and those two hon. Members. The hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) thought fit to issue placards reflecting upon the conduct of those hon. Members, and to have them posted almost within the precincts of that House; and he (Mr. Newdegate) would remind the House that at Washington, around the Legislative Assembly of the United States, there was a precinct within which the Rules were far stricter than were the Rules of the English House of Commons, for they forbade the slightest comment upon the conduct of Members of Congress. He would remind the House also of another fact, that the Senate and Assembly of France had only lately returned to Paris, from which they had removed the seat of their deliberations, because their proceedings were interrupted and their persons menaced by the populace outside. There was yet another difference; inasmuch as the hon. Member for Derby, much to his (Mr. Newdegate's) regret, not only posted those libels almost within the precincts of this House, but afterwards justified the substance of those libels in the House itself. ["No!"] Could it be alleged that the conduct of Lord Cadogan or Major Jocelyn was analogous to that? What, then, was the hon. and learned Member for Louth doing on the present occasion, but assailing those who were merely guilty of a minor and secondary offence, which, if a libel at all, should be dealt with through the publisher of the newspaper? It seemed to him that throughout the debate the other night hon. Members lost sight of the distinction that existed between libel and slander. The worst that could be charged against Lord Cadogan and Major Jocelyn was, that they had been guilty of slander, and yet the hon. and learned Member for Louth, in order to carry into effect the decision of the House on Friday, now mixed up the two offences, and appeared to be incapable of perceiving the distinction between slander and libel. He (Mr. Newdegate) opposed the "Previous Question" on Friday. And why? Because he knew it was impossible that the House should ignore the antecedent circumstances in the case of the hon. Member for Derby, seeing that those antecedent circumstances were recorded in the Votes and Proceedings of the House. If it had not been for those circumstances, he might have yielded to his feelings towards the hon. Member for Derby, whom he greatly respected for his benevolent character; but he felt that the hon. Member had so stamped his proceedings as libel before the House that, waiving all ideas of inflicting penalties on an hon. Member who had expressed his regret for what he had done, it was impossible that the House could ignore the circumstances that had occurred.

Mr. ANDERSON remarked, that when the interference of Peers at elections was referred to, hon. Members on the other side shouted the name of "Rosebery!" and the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself had said that whenever anybody spoke of such interference the name of Lord Rosebery naturally rose up. The noble Lord could defend himself well enough in the House of Lords; but when he was attacked here, there was no one to defend him, though so many to attack. He wished to point out that Lord Rosebery did not attend meetings in the county of Midlothian with reference to the coming election there. The City of Edinburgh was no part of the county of Midlothian. The City formed a county of itself, and Lord Rosebery carefully abstained from attending meetings in the county of Midlothian. But the meeting referred to by the hon. and learned Member for Louth was held within the borough of Chelsea, and with a view of influencing the coming election there. The present Motion was the first fruits of the folly of the Resolution proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on Friday. The right hon. Gentleman had been driven on by influences behind him. Common report said that a round-robin had been sent from the Carlton Club. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was in the position of a huntsman whose hounds ran riot and wanted blood; his followers were anxious to punish somebody, and they determined that the hon. Member for Derby should be the sufferer. They were not able to get all they wanted. The Chancellor of the Exchequer refused to give them the full measure of vindictive punishment by a Motion of Censure; but consented to a vote, which implied censure without saying it. That was the position which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had put the House in by the Resolution of Friday night. He could not support the present Motion, because he agreed that such Motions were absurd. The House, he thought, was sufficiently dignified to pass over all these things in perfect silence. They should not be taken notice of at all, and therefore he concurred in the Amendment for the Previous Question.

Mr. E. JENKINS wished to know how they would stand if they were to say it was not allowable to speak of the conduct of an hon. Member as degrading and inhuman, and yet it was allowable to refer to an hon. Member who was discharging, as he believed, his duty to his country as being connected with a despicable lot of Irish rebels? It was all very well for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to get up and try to minimize the effect of what had been done; but it was a fact that if this matter was passed over to-night, it would be perfectly free for any Member to get up and repeat that another hon. Member, in voting with 40 or 50 other Members, was allying himself to a despicable lot of Irish rebels; whereas, if the conduct of a single Member was called inhuman and degrading, he rendered himself liable to the effects of a Breach of Privilege. He did not think it was necessary to do more than point out the ridiculous position in which the House had been brought by the conduct of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He should vote for the Previous Question.

Mr. CHARLES LEWIS denied that there was an analogy between the present case and that of the hon. Member for Derby. The hon. Member went down to another Member's constituency to denounce him, whilst Major Jocelyn was only exercising his constitutional right as an elector of Chelsea in criticizing the conduct of his Representative. There was also a great difference between what fell from a man's mouth, and a statement written and printed in a deliberate manner. It should also be remembered that Major Jocelyn was not responsible for what appeared in the newspapers. The hon. and learned Gentleman (Sir William Harcourt) spoke about the vote of Friday being a Party vote, but he should like to know who made it so? The Chancellor of the Exchequer was not responsible for that. He (Mr. Charles Lewis) thought that this matter should not be passed over by voting the Previous Question, but that the House ought to negative the Motion itself. With regard to Lord Cadogan, the interpretation of the Rule for half a century had been that Peers might speak at political meetings which were not directly connected with elections. It would, as he had said, be hardly fair to allow this subject to be disposed of by the Previous Question. The Resolution itself ought to be negatived.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN could not but think that hon. Members opposite were somewhat unfortunate in the attempt they had made to create a distinction between the two cases which had been brought before the House. Each hon. Gentleman who had spoken had given a new distinction generally quite different from, and sometimes quite inconsistent with, that which had preceded it. The hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis) said the distinction lay in the fact that Major Jocelyn was a constituent of the hon. Baronet the Member for Chelsea (Sir Charles W. Dilke); but he forgot to state that the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) was a constitutent of the hon. and gallant Baronet the Member for Westminster (Sir Charles Russell). Then it was said that the criticism of the hon. Member for Derby was that of a Member by a Member; but in the present case the criticism by Lord Cadogan was that of a Member of one part of the Legislature by a Member of another part of it. He (Mr. Chamberlain) confessed that he could see no distinction whatever in the present case and in that complained of on Friday last. He did not see why this House should protect Gentlemen on one side from offensive statements, and decline to protect Members sitting opposite. It was said that the hon. Member had justified what he had printed, but he (Mr. Chamberlain) was not aware that he did anything of the sort. The truth was that the hon. Member for Derby made a full and ample apology; but how did hon. Members opposite know that Lord Cadogan and Major Jocelyn would not justify what they had said if they were called to the Bar of the House? Then, the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) told them that the placard written by the hon. Member for Derby was posted within the precints of the House; but he also published the placard within the borough of Guildford, and hon. Members on both sides knew that the Resolution passed on Friday last was passed as much owing to what had been done in Guildford as what had been done in Westminster. After this, he (Mr. Chamberlain) thought that the House should have a distinct and sufficient explanation of the law upon the subject. He believed the House would agree with him in saying that the Attorney General who had laid down the law so satisfactorily on the previous occasion, should once more be called upon to give hon. Members the benefit of his knowledge, so that they might be in a position to judge—seeing that questions of Privilege were becoming frequent—in what cases hon. Members would be justified in asking the House to interfere.

MR. A. MILLS remarked, that the same considerations which prevented him from voting for the Motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on Friday last would induce him to vote for the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt). He earnestly hoped that the House would waste no more time on the discussion of the matter. There was a very important Bill relating to the distress in Ireland among the Orders of the Day, and he hoped they would be allowed to proceed with that Bill.

MR. O'CONNOR POWER retorted, that if the Motion of Friday night was of sufficient importance to occupy seven or eight hours in discussion, the stigmatizing of 60 Members of that House as a despicable lot of rebels could scarcely be considered so frivolous a matter. Other people might be as sensitive when their public character was concerned as were the Friends of the hon. Member for Exeter (Mr. A. Mills). He should like some Friend of the hon. Member for Londonderry to explain by what connection Major Jocelyn's position as a constituent of the hon. Baronet the Member for Chelsea (Sir Charles W.

Dilke) justified him in branding 60 Members of that House as rebels. He (Mr. O'Connor Power) regretted that any hon. Member should think that this was a matter simply between the hon. Baronet the Member for Chelsea and his gallant but vituperative constituent. That, it seemed to him, was not the question at all. The hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. Anderson) had rendered some service to Liberal politicians by the very successful way in which he had vindicated the political action of Lord Rosebery. But he (Mr. O'Connor Power) wished to point out that Lord Rosebery had not the fear of the House of Commons before his mind. The noble Lord was not aware that the rusty weapon of Privilege was to be furbished up to do service for the Tory Party in the coming General Election. He (Mr. O'Connor Power) believed that most people would be inclined to think that neither the Motion of his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Louth nor the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for Oxford could be regarded as satisfactory. He was sorry that his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Louth had not contented himself with a Motion to the effect that Lord Cadogan and Major Jocelyn should be summoned to the Bar of the House, and be called upon to give an explanation of their extraordinary conduct. It was possible that this noble Lord and this gentleman might repudiate the expressions attributed to them in the newspaper report; but if not, the House would at least have an explanation, and if that explanation were followed by an ample and explicit apology, his countrymen who sat in that House would never think of pursuing the matter further. He was at a loss to see how the dignity of Parliament was vindicated by their following in the wake of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. W. E. FORSTER said, he thought the House had been sufficiently long amused with this matter, and he hoped that the suggestion just made by the hon. Member for Exeter (Mr. A. Mills) would be acted upon. He should himself vote for the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt), though he was of opinion that the Motion now introduced by the hon. and learned Member for Louth (Mr. Sullivan) would have the result of placing on the Records of the House a good, instead of a bad precedent, and he hoped that the effect of an almost unanimous vote would be to destroy the precedent made on Friday evening last. It seemed to him perfectly vain to attempt to draw such a distinction between the Motion before the House and that of Friday night as would justify the House in voting for the latter, and yet to refuse to vote for the present Motion by a large and almost unanimous vote. The present Motion showed how mischievous was that which had been passed on Friday evening. What did the House do then? It laid down this principle—that anything said or done calculated to coerce and intimidate Members in discharge of their duty deserved to be taken notice of by the House. There was no doubt that, according to that Resolution, Major Jocelyn had been guilty of a Breach of Privilege calculated to coerce and intimidate the hon. Member for Chelsea in the execution of his duty. Certainly, he had not done so by writing a placard, but there was no doubt Major Jocelyn intended to speak for publication, as there were reporters present when he spoke. No doubt the speaker thought that what he had said would have the effect of damaging at the General Election the prospects of the hon. Baronet the Member for Chelsea. He charged the hon. Baronet with allying himself with a set of Irish rebels. [Mr. O'Connor Power: A despicable set of Irish rebels.] A despicable set of Irish rebels. Of course, nothing could be more in the nature of a Breach of Privilege than words of that character applied to Members of this House, and he could not help remarking on the fact that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made no reference whatever to Major Jocelyn's words in his remarks. Indeed, the Chancellor of the Exchequer passed over the objectionable words. He (Mr. W. E. Forster) hoped that after they had taken the present vote, that they would proceed with the important Business on the Paper.

Mr. BIGGAR thought it would be a mistake to be in too great a hurry to vote on this question. For himself, he did not feel in the slightest degree in a hurry. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was in no hurry last Friday night, when he involved the House in a controversy which lasted from 5 o'clock until half-past 12. He admitted that there was a difference between the two cases; but the difference was this—that Major Jocelyn's conduct was more vicious than the conduct of the hon. Member for Derby, and that while in the one case the attack had been made on hon. Members whose support was useful to the Government, in the other a section of the Opposition had been attacked to whom the protection of the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not extend. The fact was, the Chancellor of the Exchequer on Friday last allowed himself to get into a thoroughly untenable position, so that his action on the present occasion exposed him to the charge of not holding the scales of justice equally as Leader of the House, and that his vindication of the Privileges of Parliament was made in the interest of his own Party.

MR. SULLIVAN said, he should take a Division, in order to afford the Government and their supporters an opportunity of effacing themselves, and also to put on record the fact that, in the face of 60 of its Representatives being publicly branded as a despicable band of Irish rebels, the Leader of the House took no steps to vindicate the character of the House, while only a few days previously, because one of his own supporters was described as having been guilty of inhuman conduct, he came forward as the champion of the Privileges of the House. The lesson would be studied in Ireland. He would exhort his countrymen to study this spectacle of the partiality of the present Government, which allowed them to be traduced in the vilest and foulest language, with a view to the General Election. The Government were endeavouring to hound on every man to denounce and defame the Irish Members on that side of the House, in order to deter hon. Gentlemen from extending to them that consideration and support which the justice of their cause might occasionally attract to their side. It was a foul attempt to check the growing sympathy of the public, at which the Government trembled every day. If the Ministerial votes decided that it was not a Breach of Privilege to describe 60 Members of the House as a "despicable lot of Irish rebels," it would have an effect upon the future conduct of those Members in that House. He should go to a Division, even if he had only two Members with him.

SIR JOSEPH M'KENNA said, he could not understand how any vote the House could come to would have the effect of stigmatizing 60 of its Members as despicable and as rebels. For his part, knowing something about Major Jocelyn, he should rather regard anything which he might say about him in the way of censure as great praise. Nobody who knew Major Jocelyn's political temper paid the slightest respect to what he said or did. He believed his present opposition to be one of the most effective means of returning his hon. Friend the Member for Chelsea almost without opposition at the approaching General Election. He should decline to give Major Jocelyn the dignity of a vote either on the one side or the other.

Previous Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 15; Noes 229: Majority 214.—(Div. List, No. 18.)

PARLIAMENT — PRIVILEGE — LONDON NEWSPAPERS.—RESOLUTION.

MR. O'DONNELL said, he was so convinced of the force of the overpowering arguments brought by the Government on Friday night on the subject of libels, and the defamation of Members, that he was induced to bring forward a series of the most gross and scandalous libels on the Irish Members, a series as bad as any that had ever appeared, and that was saying a good deal. It was unnecessary for him to go over the precedents, but when he had gone over the extracts, he believed it would be difficult to avoid supporting the Motion he would propose. He had to call the attention of the House to a series of the most atrocious libels—though for the most part he and his Irish Colleagues could well afford to treat them with the most supreme indifference, but for the action of the Government and the conclusive evidence it afforded of a deliberate plot which was being prepared for the purpose of damaging the Irish cause and Irish Members in the eyes of the nation. In *The World* of February 18th, there was an article entitled "Our Brilliant Brethren," which was the designation applied to the Irish people by Lord Beaconsfield at a banquet at a time when severe distress existed in Ireland. The first part of the article had reference to a recent black-balling of a very amiable and distinguished Member of the Home Rule Party at a political club which was popularly supposed to be conducted on Liberal principles. The chief part of the article, however, was an attack on himself, the Member for Dungarvan, who was then addressing the House, and in it he was held up to scorn and contumely as a sort of social and political monster, and the tasteful editor came to the conclusion as the climax of his vituperation that "Mr. O'Donnell has even an undignified presence and unprepossessing features." That was, doubtless, a severe reproach to be thus singled out in an Assembly which had such a reputation for the unblemished beauty of all its Members. He would, however, not weary the House with his own woes on the subject. They must remember that *The World* was a paper that exercised great influence upon what was called Society, and he thought there was much in the article that deserved the attention of the House. The article went on—

> "The Irish Members constitute the 'ragged regiment' of the House of Commons. As such they naturally excite English suspicion and dislike. But want of dignity and of social consideration is only one of their faults, and is far from being their worst. Whatever offends against the traditions and prejudice of Englishmen will be found amongst them. The term 'political adventurer' continues to be one of reproach, and the noisiest and most conspicuous of the Representatives of Ireland are political adventurers of the most repulsive type. They are playing a mercenary and mischievous game in a singularly unscrupulous manner. They have none of the courage which redeems conspiracy from turpitude, none of the wit or genius which raises agitators above the rank of offending against the public peace. For months past they have been deliberately attempting to foment a civil war in Ireland, a war in which the real sufferers would be the distressed population, for ends suggested by their own mean ambition. If they had failed to promote schemes of disturbance on any large scale, it is because Irish people have shown a greater amount of common sense than could have been expected. If their schemes are in any measure successful, Ireland and not England will be the victim. All this these men knew perfectly well. They knew that their only chance of maintaining their influence with their compatriots, who are their victims, is by exhibiting an unlimited capacity for noise and obstruction at Westminster. If their real objects had been patriotic or philanthropic, they would have hastened to assist and not to thwart the progress of the Irish Relief Bill through the House of Commons. Their purpose is to waste time in order that men may know that they hold the Imperial Parliament at their mercy."

Charges of such a grave character were distinctly Breaches of the Privileges of that House. If any Party or any hon. Members had been guilty of such offences as were there indicated, it was the business of the House to deal with them. Were the Irish Members, whom no one ventured to charge with one single act of illegality, to be held up to the indignation of England by language of that description? Irish Members were charged with "playing a mercenary and mischievous game in a singularly unscrupulous manner." Would any hon. Member deny that that was a libel of the most atrocious description. "They had none of the courage which reedems conspiracy from turpitude." That charged them with turpitude; while the general body of the Irish Members were charged with being "offenders against the public peace," and with thwarting the progress of the Irish Relief Bill. If there was a grain of truth in these charges, what could be said of the unpatriotic, the wretched and utterly contemptible policy of any Party or Government which would refrain from dealing with mercenary and unscrupulous agitators bent on thwarting the passage of the Irish Relief Bills from motives of the meanest ambition? If no Party or no Government dared to bring such charges against Members of the House, were the Privileges of the House to be engrossed by journals of importance and influence in the country? It was, above all, for the Ministerial Party and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to show cause why that foul and atrocious libel should not be declared a Breach of the Privileges of that House. He had a large number of similar Breaches of Privilege, and though he might make separate Motions on them he would not do so. He would next take another paper, which, he believed, exactly represented the foreign and domestic policy in all respects of the Government—namely, *The Morning Advertiser*. In an article in that paper on February 6th, the most moderate and reasonable Amendment of the Leader of the Home Rule Party to the Address was characterized as Obstruction. The Irish Members were said to be a "despicable set of Irish rebels," and the Liberal Party were charged with being, more or less, accessory to their tactics. In another part of the article it said—

> "The Liberal Opposition having had its innings, gave place to the Home Rulers, who at once showed fight, and gave earnest of what they mean to be during the Session. Lord Hartington spoke in strong, and it might be said gratuitous, denunciation of obstruction last night; but, as he subsequently expressed his sympathy with the men who were obstructing, we may take it he was only exercising that 'juggling fiend,' the Liberal oracle, which has been paltering with us in a double sense concerning, for instance, the party intrigue at Liverpool."

The lesson practically taught to the people in this journalistic country was that the Home Rulers were a disreputable set of Irish rebels, and that the Liberal Party were, more or less, at their disposition. After referring to the obstruction from the Liberal Benches, the Liberal Party were then charged with the crime of conniving at obstruction. In its issue of February 13, the same paper continued its attacks, and in the same vein. It observed—

> "It is a pity that the Home Rule Leader has no more than a nominal influence with his following. If the distress in Ireland be anything like so serious as these Gentlemen represent, they are guilty of a crime in impeding the safeguard proposed by the Government for the prevention of famine and the succour of distress. It will not do by-and-bye to say the Government took action too late, when we see the Irish Members wasting the first week of the Session in objections and comments which were superfluous after the opening discussion."

In all these animadversions against the Home Rulers there was not a single reference to the fact that the Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill, as brought in by the Government, was a thoroughly disfranchising Bill, and that it was only the threat of the very utmost obstruction that induced the Government on Friday night to introduce into the Bill a saving clause relieving from disfranchisement the recipients of relief. Then, again, in its impression of February 20, *The Morning Advertiser* repeated the charge that the Irish Members were guilty of the inhuman conduct of impeding the progress of the Relief Bill. *The Morning Advertiser* of last Saturday again made a deliberate charge of wilful obstruction against certain Irish Members of the House, stating that it was doubtful whether upon any occasion since obstruction was invented it had displayed itself in a more vexatious and offensive form, alleging its object to be to defeat the Motion and Amendment of the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) and the hon. Member for Mid-Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) respectively. That was a perfectly wanton, silly, and most libellous imputation, for nothing could be further from the ideas of the Home Rule Members, both Motion and Amendment being regarded by them with an interesting and amusing benevolence as far removed as possible from any sentiment of hostility. Then the Conservative organ continued its libels by tracing a connection between the obstructive tactics of the Home Rule Members and the action of the Liberal Party in fulfilment, as it alleged, of an understanding that the Home Rule "criminals" should be the secret and, as far as possible, the avowed support of the Liberal rivals of Her Majesty's Government. In taking notice of these libels in this supporter of the Ministerial Party, he did not think the House ought to shut its eyes to the fact that *The Morning Advertiser* was the official organ of the greatest body of Conservative agents in the United Kingdom. All these libels of Home Rule Members, all these charges imputing criminal complicity to the Liberal Party, were disseminated through 100,000 tap-rooms throughout Great Britain, and formed the mental pabulum which excited thousands and tens of thousands of voters. When Members of the Government went down to Liverpool and elsewhere, and denounced the Liberal Party for their criminal intrigues with obstructive Home Rulers, they found the ground prepared for them by the poisonous and malignant falsehoods spread through the country by organs like *The Morning Advertiser*. These libels formed portions of a vast system of deliberate misrepresentation, and had been devised in order to carry through a false, abominable, and foul electioneering intrigue to discredit the Liberal Party at the next Election. Then, again, they had a series of articles in *The Daily Telegraph*, a paper which was not more remarkable for the steadiness of its circulation than for the versatility of its opinions, being as devoted a supporter of the present Government as it was of the former Government while it existed, and which were false and villainous, and misrepresented the Home Rule Party in every particular. No matter what they did, or how constitutional might be their action, motives were attributed to them, which clearly constituted a Breach of Privilege. The influence of the newspaper ought legitimately to enter into the consideration of the House in calculating the gravity of the offences which it habitually committed against the Privileges of Parliament. On February 9, immediately after the introduction of the constitutional Amendment of the Home Rule Party to the Address, and before there was any reasonable excuse for talking about obstruction, or for holding up himself (Mr. O'Donnell) as a bogey to frighten Conservative children, *The Daily Telegraph* commenced to direct its libels against the Irish Party in the House, the whole aim of its false and villainous misrepresentations being to make it appear to the constituencies that Liberal candidates ought to be rejected because they were the criminal accomplices of the Home Rulers. The moderate action of the most moderate Members on that side of the House was denounced as a deliberate waste of time, and pursued simply for the purpose of hampering legislation. This was stated, again, for the evident purpose of prejudicing, not only the Home Rulers, but the Liberal Party in the eyes of the country. A constant fire of libels had been kept up by the *The Daily Telegraph* from day to day, and would be kept up from month to month, unless Parliament stepped in and arrested the infamous abuse. That journal had also stated the utter falsehood that the part the Home Rule Members took in the debate on the question of Privilege was intended to baulk the Motion of the hon. Member for North Warwickshire on the subject of Obstruction. Well, the Motion of the hon. Member seemed to him (Mr. O'Donnell) to be the most admirable piece of obstructive machinery that could possibly be introduced; and, therefore, it was not likely that it would have been opposed for the reason suggested, although he should have opposed it for the sake of the honour and dignity of the House. It would have introduced a sort of round game into the House, in which every Member would have been able to take notice of everybody else; and he ventured to say that, after a fortnight's Parliamentary romping, it would have been found that the performances did not conduce to the dignity of the House. On the other hand, he approved of the Resolutions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and, if altered in one or two particulars, would do all he could to assist in carrying them out; but at present it stood that Irish Members on that side of the House could not do or say anything—could not even concern themselves with their own business—without being accused of committing high crimes against Parliament. Again, *The Pall Mall Gazette,* a paper professing to be written by gentlemen for gentlemen, had, in one of its articles, grossly libelled a section of the House, and had thus also abused its Privileges. That paper openly stated that the Home Rulers had hit upon a plan which enabled them to make representative institutions almost ridiculous, and that their conduct both in and out of Parliament had shown that their one object had been to render all government under existing conditions impossible. There was a plot and a conspiracy, not only against Home Rulers, but against the Liberal Party, and the venom was penetrating into a thousand veins—into the whole system of the body politic. He also desired to refer to what had appeared in *The Liverpool Courier.* The correspondent of that journal, who, no doubt, merely acted up to the general directions which he received from the management of the paper, referring to the debate raised by the Leader of the House last Friday night, said—

> "Everyone expected that the Marquess of Hartington would rise to second the Resolution upon which everyone expected that the debate would begin."

That was the debate on the Resolutions of the hon. Member for North Warwickshire. *The Courier* proceeded—

> "Not so, however; Sir William Harcourt was to the fore. Here was a case in which faction would make itself prominent."

No one laughed at these things more than he, regarded from a personal standpoint. The sentiments with which he looked upon them did not rise even to contempt; but they were vile and vicious Breaches of Parliamentary Privilege. They were part of a deliberate plot to falsify the proceedings of Parliament to the country and to deceive the nation. They were deliberate attacks upon that which was the centre and the safeguard of representation and government in this country. It was to be hoped that after a few exposures of this kind the country would understand what such allegations really meant; but it was not to be forgotten what the effect of such misrepresentations must be throughout Ireland. The House must not forget what the effect of such vile and vicious attacks must be in regard to the Irish Representatives. Indiscriminately—without distinction—the most moderate of the Irish Members were charged with the most atrocious and odious designs. Sometimes they were taken in a lump lot and described as a despicable set of Irish rebels; at other times individual Members, while performing their duty in a most constitutional manner, were held up to the reprobation of Englishmen. He hoped the House would acquit him of having said a single unnecessary word. He had confined himself to a few of the specimens and examples of the violations of Privilege which these newspapers had committed, and with these remarks he would bring the papers up to the Table of the House, and move that the articles which he had cited from them were Breaches of the Privileges of the House.

MR. SPEAKER pointed out to the hon. Member that, in such cases, it was usual to hand in in writing the names of the papers whose articles it was intended to impugn, specifying the articles complained of.

MR. O'DONNELL said, he would comply with the requirement at once. The reason why he had not done so before was that he did not wish to make his Motion unnecessarily cumbrous.

The hon. Member, having re-written his Amendment and handed it to the Chair,

MR. SPEAKER: The House is aware that, according to the ordinary practice of the House, when complaints are made of the character of articles in newspapers, the newspapers containing such articles are brought up to the Table and the passages complained of are read by the Clerk to the House. In the present case, the hon. Member for Dungarvan has brought up a series of newspapers containing the articles which are cited in his Resolution. They are four articles in *The Morning Advertiser*, four articles in *The Daily Telegraph*, one article in *The Pall Mall Gazette*, and one article in *The World*. Now, I feel that if I were to call on the Clerk at the Table to read all these articles so complained of I should be trifling with the House. I shall, therefore, take leave to depart from the ordinary course. I feel it my duty to put to the House the Motion which the hon. Member for Dungarvan has placed in my hands, and it will be for the House to take such course as it may think proper with regard to that Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the article entitled 'Our Brilliant Brethren' in the 'World' of the 18th instant, and the articles in the 'Morning Advertiser' of the 6th, 13th, 20th, and 21st instant, the 'Daily Telegraph' of the 9th, 12th, 13th, and 23rd instant, and the 'Pall Mall Gazette' of the 21st instant, read to this House, contain breaches of the Privileges of this House."—(*Mr. O'Donnell.*)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER thought the Speaker had exercised a wise discretion in departing from the usual practice of calling upon the Clerk at the Table to read the newspaper articles complained of. Indeed, he thought the House would feel that its time would be very much wasted by these articles being read over a second time. Hon. Members were in some difficulty, however, from hearing the articles read once only, as they hardly had an opportunity of really knowing what were the particular charges supposed to be contained in such articles. They seemed to him to be very like a great many other articles which had appeared at different times in newspapers all over the Kingdom. No doubt, if it were the object of the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. O'Donnell) to make a complaint of every newspaper in which articles appeared which were displeasing to or which reflected upon his conduct or that of other hon. Members, there would be abundance of material for a very protracted Session. It did not appear to him that the articles contained anything to an extraordinary degree more offensive than the sort of criticism on all Parties which was constantly seen in the newspaper Press. He had often seen articles directed against Her Majesty's Government which contained very disagreeable matter, which might undoubtedly be brought forward in that House, and which they all agreed were technically Breaches of Privilege. Still, he did not apprehend that the House would now begin a course of taking notice of every Breach of Privilege of that character which occurred. Of course, they understood the meaning of all this. It had reference not only to these particular articles, but to the proceedings of Friday last; and it was intended to be a kind of reflection on the course which Her Majesty's Government and he, as Leader of the House, pursued on that occasion. But he did not see the slighest analogy between the two cases, and he did not intend to be driven into arguing them. With regard to these particular complaints, he thought it would be a waste of time for the House to go into any general discussion on the subject; and, therefore, he would content himself with moving, as an Amendment to the hon. Gentleman's Resolution—"That this House do now proceed to the Orders of the Day."

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON, in seconding the Amendment, said, he understood it to be exactly analogous to that of the Previous Question which his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt) moved a short time ago in a somewhat similar case, and which was agreed to by the House. He must congratulate the Government on having at length on that, the third occasion, learnt the right way of proceeding in cases of this kind. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer said he did not see the slightest analogy between the cases brought forward this evening and that of the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) which was discussed on Friday. While willing to admit that they were not exactly the same case, he could not agree that there was no analogy whatever between them. He thought, however, the right hon. Gentleman exercised a wise discretion in not discussing the matter further, and it was his intention to follow the right hon. Gentleman's example. The House discussed the question on Friday at great length, and he did not want to re-open it. The Government ought, however, to have known from their former experience that proceedings of that character invariably and inevitably led to a great waste of the time of the House by the adoption of recriminatory proceedings. He was glad the right hon. Gentleman had met the Motion in the way he had done; for he did not think it would have been possible for the House to negative the Motion. Certain passages in the articles which had been read were undoubtedly serious Breaches of Privilege; and the Government, with the majority it had to support it, ought to be very careful how it proceeded in cases of Breach of Privilege which were directed against one section of the House, and how it disregarded cases directed against any other section. Although, undoubtedly, very grave Breaches of Privilege were brought under the notice of the House by the hon. Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell), the House, he thought, did well in general to decline to exercise its undoubted power, and to resolve not to take any further step. They were justly jealous of their own Privileges, but equally jealous, he hoped, of the freedom of the Press and freedom of discussion. They had been already led astray by what he considered one unfortunate blunder, and he hoped they would not be led further astray, and go into these general questions of Breach of Privilege. He agreed with some observations which had fallen from the hon. Member, to the effect that an attempt was being made throughout the country at the present time to identify the Party which sat on that side of the House with certain proceedings which hon. Members representing Irish constituencies thought it their duty to enter upon. When the proper time arrived he should be ready to take an opportunity of repudiating accusations of that sort which had been made. He was well aware that they were made, and he had a reasonable suspicion of their object; but the present was not an occasion for taking up the time of the House by answering attacks made in the newspapers. He thought their conduct in the House and in the country would constitute a better reply than any speech he could make to imputations of that sort; and with perfect confidence he left the character of his hon. Friends who sat on that side of the House to the judgment of the country.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House do now proceed to the Orders of the Day."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

MR. BIGGAR denied the proposition maintained by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that there was no analogy between the cases of Breaches of Privileges which had been discussed on Friday and to-day. The analogy, he thought, was clear, and he was convinced that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer had any love of impartiality he would have voted for his hon. Friend's (the Member for Dungarvan's) Motion. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to think that nothing written or spoken in favour of the Tory Party could be anything other than thoroughly innocent; and that the converse of the proposition must indubitably be true. This was a view to which he (Mr. Biggar), for one, could not assent.

MR. SHAW said, he hoped that his hon. Friend the Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell) would not press his Motion, and that he would accept the Amendment of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He (Mr. Shaw) thought it was a pity to take any notice of the articles referred to. For his part, he had read a good many of them which had been brought under his notice that evening; but he always regarded such articles with great indifference as long as he knew they were undeserved. He assumed that they were either inspired, or the outcome of a political intrigue. In any case, he had confidence in his cause, and believed that the misrepresentation of the English papers would do good instead of harm to it. Nothing could be more damaging to the morals of the English people than the articles published in the English journals for some time past. He would not like to say they had been got up for electioneering purposes; but he thought the English people, who were lovers of fair play, would say that this mode of assailing political opponents was contemptible in the extreme. If it had any effect in Ireland, it would rather secure the seats of the Home Rule Members than otherwise.

MR. NEWDEGATE said, that the views expressed in the newspapers with regard to the conduct of a certain section of the Irish Members represented the general opinion of the English people. He must, however, say that the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) was not in any way identified in that opinion with other hon. Members whose conduct had been so condemned. He hoped that the Motion, if pressed to a division, would be negatived, inasmuch as it embodied a desire on the part of a certain section of the House to escape from the consequences of their acts, and also to waste the time of Parliament.

MR. O'DONNELL said, the discussion which had taken place met the object he had in view in bringing the question forward; and he should not, therefore, ask the House to divide on the question which he had brought forward, but would accept the suggestion of the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw).

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question," put, and *negatived.*

Words *added.*

Main Question, as amended, put.

Resolved, That this House do now proceed to the Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND) BILL.

(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. James Lowther, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.*)

[BILL 84.] CONSIDERATION AS AMENDED.

Bill, as amended, *considered.*

MR. BIGGAR moved the insertion of the following new clause:—

(Loans to occupiers of agricultural holdings.)

"And whereas, by reason of the distress amongst the occupiers of land in Ireland, it has become desirable to extend the powers and facilities for granting loans under the provisions of the Land Improvement Acts, and under the provisions of 'The Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878,' and 'The Public Health (Ireland) Amendment Act, 1879:' Be it therefore Enacted, That the Commissioners of Public Works shall, at any time after the passing of this Act, have power to lend money, as set forth in Section nine, and at the same rates, to occupiers of agricultural holdings, on the security of their said holdings, for permanent improvements on the soil."

If the Government advanced money to the tenants to improve their holdings the loan would become a first charge on the land; and they would, therefore, have full security for the re-payment of their money.

New Clause (Loans to occupiers of agricultural holdings,)—(*Mr. Biggar,*)—*brought up,* and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the said Clause be now read a second time."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. GIBSON) said, that this part of the Bill was really retrospective in its operation, and the Amendment dealt with a question that was not open, because the 9th section, to which it applied, dealt only with past loans made to landlords and sanitary authorities, and not to future ones, as the hon. Member imagined. No advance could be made under it after the 29th of the present month, before which time it was not likely to pass. The proposed clause dealt with a subject in reference to which a vast number of considerations should be taken into account; and if they were entered upon they would lead, and to no purpose, to endless delay. He, therefore, hoped it would not be pressed to a division, as it was one which should not find its way into the present Bill.

MR. SHAW supported the clause. There were a number of improvements which might be made by tenants, and which would cost less than £100. He did not think the Government could consider a more important subject than the drainage of land, although the object of his hon. Friend (Mr. Biggar) could hardly be attained under the present temporary Bill. He would remind his hon. Friend that the improvements made, or to be made, under the Bill as it now stood were tenants' improvements as much as they were landlords' improvements. The only interest the landlord had in them was that they improved his property and increased his security for the payment of his rent. He hoped the Government would give the subject their best consideration, with a view to its insertion, if not in this Bill, in some general measure, and asked his hon. Friend not to divide the House.

MR. SYNAN concurred in the view of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw), but thought that it would be necessary for the Government to deal with the question in a thorough manner as soon as the present crisis had passed away.

MR. P. MARTIN said, the principle involved in the proposal of the hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) was one of deep importance. It called upon the Government so to arrange their system of loans that they should be made to the tenants for the purpose of enabling them to work on their own lands. A system of relief now required was one which would not cause the neglect of agriculture. The tenant ought to be set to work on his own land. In England it appeared, under 59 *Geo.* III. c. 12, relief could be given by Guardians to able-bodied persons by way of loan. Such an arrangement would prove most beneficial to the country.

MR. BIGGAR said, he would not put the House to the trouble of a division.

MR. H. A. HERBERT said, the tenants often did not understand draining, and would require to be instructed by competent men. It might happen, too, that improvement works which were highly important were of such magnitude as to require the co-operation of several landlords. As a landlord, he must thank the Government for the help they had given, which had been a good deal taken up in his county. As an instance of what drainage would do for land, he could mention some land the drainage of which would cost £300, and which land, then worth 5*s.* an acre, would be worth £2 an acre after two croppings. He had always been opposed to extreme measures when they were brought forward; but no one would be more pleased than he should be to see measures brought forward in the House to stimulate agriculture and make tenants more comfortable.

MR. KIRK said, he thought a strong case had been made out against the landlords in Ireland, who had allowed millions of acres to lie waste to the present time, and that a strong case had also been made out for allowing the occupiers to be the parties to expend money on the land. The hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) only wished that the occupiers should have the same opportunity of expending money on the land they held as the landowners, and that their holdings should be security for that expenditure. The hon. Member for Kerry (Mr. H. A. Herbert) had stated that a good many of the tenant farmers of Ireland were ignorant of drainage. That was true to some extent; but the reason was that they had never had an opportunity of investing money in the soil which they tilled without the fear that some day or other the improvements made by themselves might be taken by the landlord. That was one of the reasons, at any rate, for the neglect of agricultural drainage; but he believed that in a large part of Ireland the tenants were quite capable of draining their lands, if they only had the opportunity given them by means of a Government loan. The Board of Works always sent a person down to see the improvements, and if they were not up to the mark they would not pay for them; and in the same way the occupiers must do their improvements to the satisfaction of a person sent down by the Board of Works. Therefore, he thought the clause was one which the Government ought to consider if possible; and if they did not insert something like it in the present Bill, he hoped they would produce something in the future which would allow the occupiers to receive money on the security of their land, and thus to drain the lands which the hon. Member for Kerry said were not worth more than 5*s.* an acre now, and which had been left in that state from the 17th century to the present time by the landlords of Ireland. He hoped the tenants would have an opportunity of expending money on such land so as to make it worth £2 an acre.

THE O'DONOGHUE said, all the improvements were, as a general rule, made by the tenants, and the fact had been made the basis of all recent legislation. The Government seemed now to establish a new principle, that the improvements should be made by the landlords; and they made it impossible for the tenants to enter into competition as the landlords were to have the exclusive use of the public money. He had from the first been against loans to landlords, and he believed they would be productive of great mischief, and that the efforts of all who were interested in the welfare of the occupiers of Ireland ought to be directed to securing for them the advantage of being enabled to improve their holdings themselves.

Question put, and *negatived.*

MR. BIGGAR moved the following new clause:—

(Suspension of actions of ejectment.)

"That all actions of ejectment from agricultural holdings be suspended from the date of the passing of this Act, and that, in cases where a decree for possession of any agricultural holding has been granted, such decree shall be suspended for the period of one year from the passing of this Act."

He said, he thought this clause was so important that he intended, if it were not accepted by the Government, to divide upon it.

New Clause (Suspension of actions of ejectment)—(*Mr. Biggar,*)—*brought up,* and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the said Clause be now read a second time."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. GIBSON) said, that in opposing the clause of the hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) it must not be understood that he was advising landlords to press on actions of ejectments, except where the circumstances absolutely required it. From whatever point of view the clause was regarded, the House would, he thought, be satisfied that it was not one which could be reasonably ever passed, and he hoped that further consideration would convince the hon. Member that he should not proceed to a division. The clause proposed, without qualification or examination or any distinction whatever, to suspend for one year in every part of Ireland all actions of ejectments. Let the House consider how extravagantly and unreasonably wide that suggestion was. If the clause were passed a man could not proceed to assert his title by ejectment in any Court in Ireland, no matter what the circumstances were. The hon. Member would hardly say that that was within the region of rational legislation. He also proposed to suspend the right of ejectment for non-payment of rent, and that without qualification. He proposed to take no account of whether it was a thriving and prosperous district, of the character of the tenant, and of the amount which he owed. A tenant might have the money in his pocket and arbitrarily refuse to pay his rent, and yet, under this clause, he would be equally protected with the tenant who was entitled to their sympathy. The fact was that this was not a matter susceptible of being dealt with by legislation; it must be left to the right feeling and intelligence of those who had to exercise these rights, and he apprehended that the right feeling of every person connected with land in Ireland at the present time of trial must be to give and take a little on all sides, and not to press legal rights to an extreme point. If it were said that right feeling could not be relied on to restrain landlords, then he replied that their good sense and prudence would suggest to them not to press the right to actions of ejectment to an extreme extent, because it was most undesirable in the interest of the landlord that he should have farms thrown upon his hands by tenants being driven out from circumstances of poverty, distress, and destitution; therefore, the self-interest of the landlord would cause him to be very cautious about exercising this right of ejectment. Above all, it would be such an interference with all the rights of property and all the institutions that must regulate the rights of property that he did not think it ever could be entertained by the House of Commons.

Mr. SHAW said, he was quite sure that his hon. Friend the Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) would have no objection to amend his clause, so as to confine its operations to the scheduled districts and to cases of non-payment of arrears of rent. But he concluded, from the latter part of the right hon. and learned Gentleman's remarks, that he was opposed in principle to the clause. He admitted that it was a very wide subject, but thought it would be no harm for the Government to turn their attention to the subject; for although he was willing to admit that the great majority of landlords were acting fairly towards the tenants, and not pressing them for rents wherever it could possibly be avoided, yet there were cases where an opposite course was taken and much hardship thereby inflicted. He had prepared an Amendment bearing on the subject, but which had, unfortunately, been left out of the Paper, which he thought that the Government might accept. It was to the effect that non-payment of rent in the distressed districts should not operate as a bar to the recovery of compensation by a tenant who was ejected. If the Government would introduce an Amendment to that effect it would remedy many cases of injustice.

Mr. P. MARTIN admitted that the clause of the hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) was open to many of the objections which had been stated to it by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland, and thought that, under the circumstances, it would be vain to ask the House to assent to any such clause; but the Amendment suggested by his hon. Friend the Member for the county of Cork (Mr. Shaw) was of a totally different character, and it was one that appeared to him to be well deserving of consideration at the hands of the Government. All it meant was that in the poor distressed districts of the South of Ireland the tenants should have extended to them a privilege already enjoyed by the more prosperous tenants of the North of Ireland under the Ulster Tenant Right. It interfered with no contracts, and deprived the landlord of nothing which he ought to have.

Question put.

The House *divided:*—Ayes 4; Noes 93: Majority 89.—(Div. List, No. 19.)

Clause 3 (Extension of power to grant out-door relief in food and fuel).

Mr. BIGGAR moved to amend the clause by inserting in page 2, line 2, after the word "purpose," the words "to renew or." The object of his Amendment was to make it quite clear that the Local Government Board had the power to renew the instructions to give out-door relief, the clause at present only giving power to give out-door relief for a period of two calendar months.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 2, after the word "purpose," to insert the words "to renew or."—(*Mr. Biggar.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'to renew or' be there inserted."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Gibson) said, the matter was dealt with in the earlier portion of the Bill, and there was no doubt that power was given to renew the instructions for out-door relief in Unions where it was necessary. The Amendment, therefore, was not needed.

Question put, and *negatived.*

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Gibson) moved to omit from page 2 all words after "Any," in line 17, to the word "Act," in line 25, inclusive. The words he proposed to omit were those which were introduced when the Bill was in Committee by the hon. and learned Member for Limerick (Mr. O'Shaughnessy), to give power to the Local Government Board to enable central Poor Law Guardians to make advances. He (Mr. Gibson) had carefully considered the matter, and had come to the conclusion that it would be better to give a wider discretion, and therefore he proposed to omit the Amendment; and should also propose an omission in Clause 4, in order to insert an Amendment in the clause giving all Unions the power to make advances.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY said, he was perfectly satisfied with the right hon. and learned Gentleman's Amendment, and he had no objection to his Amendment being omitted.

Amendment *agreed to;* words *struck out* accordingly.

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 4 (Power to borrow).

On the Motion of Mr. ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND, the following Amendments were made:—In page 2, line 28, leave out from "scheduled" to "seventy-nine" in lines 31 and 32, inclusive; and in line 37, leave out from the word "Every" to the word "expenses" in line 43, inclusive.

MR. SHAW moved, as an Amendment, in page 3, line 12, to leave out the word "ten," and insert the word "twenty" in lieu thereof, so as to make the period over which loans to local authorities were to be repayable 20 years instead of 10. He would have been prepared to make it 30 years when the Bill was in Committee, but the Government declined to accede to the suggestion; but he hoped they would favourably consider the present Amendment.

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 12, to leave out the word "ten," in order to insert the word "twenty."—(*Mr. Shaw.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'ten' stand part of the Bill."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he was compelled to oppose the Amendment, believing that 10 years was an ample time to allow for the re-payment of the money. If it was extended beyond that, the Unions would be placed in an embarrassing position in regard to re-payments, and he thought 10 years was a most liberal allowance. Besides, they had no right, and it was inadvisable, to burden posterity in the matter.

MR. SYNAN thought it was in the interest of the Treasury to accept the Amendment, as the state of the country was such that, in several of the electoral divisions of Ireland, they would never be able to repay the money in so short a time as 10 years. The result would be, if the Amendment was not adopted, that appeals would be made to the Government at a future time to remit the whole of the loans. He thought, in fact, that in some of the Unions in the West of Ireland the Government was not very likely to get its money back at all. He wished, further, to point out that, even if 20 years were given, that would be 10 years less than was given in the case of Lancashire.

THE O'DONOGHUE supported the Amendment, on the ground that if only 10 years was allowed for the re-payment of loans it would prevent many Boards of Guardians from availing themselves of the advantages offered by the Bill.

Question put.

The House *divided:*—Ayes 96; Noes 33: Majority 63.—(Div. List, No. 20.)

MR. SHAW moved, as an Amendment, in page 3, line 33, to omit the word "three," and insert the word "two" in lieu thereof, so as to allow local authorities to borrow money at 2½ per cent interest instead of 3½ per cent. In doing so he was not asking the Government to advance English or Scotch money at that rate, but only to advance Irish money. The Government themselves got money from the Irish people in the Irish Post Office Savings Banks at 2½ per cent, and he thought that it was only reasonable they should advance money for the relief of distress at the same rate of interest.

Amendment proposed, in page 10, line 33, to leave out the word "three," in order to insert the word "two."—(*Mr. Shaw.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'three' stand part of the Bill."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, whatever else the hon.

Gentleman opposite (Mr. Shaw) had shown, it could not be denied that he had shown considerable ingenuity in the foundation upon which he rested his proposal. The hon. Gentleman complained that the money was taken, not out of Imperial funds, but out of Irish funds. He desired to have a separate finance administration, with an Irish Exchequer to deal with Irish taxation. Those were matters which could not be entered into; they must treat the Exchequer as a whole. It was proposed that we should lend the money not at 3½ per cent, but at 2½ per cent. The 3½ per cent would not bring a profit; but it would save the Exchequer from a loss, and the Government thought it was doing very good service to lend the money to Boards of Guardians at that rate. They could not get it at so low a rate elsewhere, and without the Bill they could not borrow it at all. He could not break up the usual system of lending money, and the only alternative was to stand to the figures in the Bill.

Mr. SYNAN urged that the proposal of his hon. Friend (Mr. Shaw) did not involve the separation of the Exchequer of the two countries. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was afraid of loss to the Exchequer; but why not lend out the money at the same rate of interest paid to depositors in the savings banks? The only answer to the proposal was that it would separate the two Exchequers; and, therefore, the Irish paupers must be charged 3½ per cent. The argument remained the same, and the right hon. Gentleman had not answered it.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 15 (Remuneration for county officers).

Mr. SHAW said, that the section of the clause referring to money to be borrowed to cover loss gave the Grand Jury power to grant compensation to landowners without previous application to the presentment sessions. That was giving very large powers to the Grand Juries, and he should move the omission of the words "without previous application to presentment sessions," in order to insert the words, "having been previously approved by presentment sessions."

Amendment proposed, in page 10, line 33, to leave out the words "without previous application to presentment sessions."—(*Mr. Shaw.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill."

Mr. J. LOWTHER remarked, that the words objected to were put in to save time. The whole machinery would hang fire without them. The object of the Bill was to afford immediate relief by means of public works, and the presentment sessions had to consider the matter in the first instance. The money might then be advanced without further reference.

Mr. SHAW: I am quite sure that I am right, and that the right hon. Gentleman is wrong; but I will withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Mr. J. LOWTHER: This matter has been very fully considered by the House, and as it is of a very urgent character I now appeal to hon. Members to allow it to be read a third time.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Bill be now read the third time," — (*Mr. James Lowther,*) — put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

CRIMINAL CODE BILL—[Bill 2.]

(*Mr. Attorney General, Mr. Solicitor General, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir John Holker), in rising to move that the Bill be now read a second time, said, it was, at least by name, very well known to the House. It would not be necessary for him minutely to describe the provisions of this voluminous measure, as he had explained them with considerable elaboration on a former occasion, and it had also been explained in various pamphlets and prints which had been published to the world. It would suffice to say that it attempted what had never, he believed, been attempted before—the codification of a substantial part of the law. It proposed to state in a number of terse, lucid, and comprehensive sentences, the law of England and Ireland upon the subject of ordinary crime, and also the law relating to the procedure by indictment against those who committed such crimes. This codification was exceedingly desirable, and would, if accomplished in this instance, set an example for codification of the law generally. But, besides this, the Bill proposed to alter the existing law in several important respects; and he thought that when the proposed alterations were carefully considered they would all appear to be great amendments of the law. He would not attempt that evening to deal with all the alterations; he would merely glance at the most important and salient. In the first part of the Bill, which related to the commission of offences, the main alterations were—1, The abolition of the distinction between felony and misdemeanours, which would get rid of a number of very absurd and monstrous consequences; 2, The introduction of certain amendments into the law with regard to the doctrine of compulsion and coercion; 3, The improvement of the law of homicide, which involved the extinction of the universally condemned doctrine of constructive malice; and 4, The simplification of the law relating to theft and fraud. These were the principal alterations of the first part of the Bill. In the part of the Bill which related to procedure, several alterations were to be found—1, Provisions getting rid of the absurdities arising under the existing law from the doctrine of venue; 2, Provisions for changing the place of trial when necessary; 3, Provisions for the trial of criminals by special juries in cases of exceptional difficulty; 4, Provisions for the simplification of indictments; 5, Provisions for the keeping of a simple record of the proceedings, and the sweeping away of technicalities which rendered proceedings by way of writ of error next door to impossible; 6, Enactments as to juries and the challenging of jurors; 7, Provision enabling the jury to have a view when required; 8, Provisions giving a more satisfactory appeal in criminal cases upon points of law; 9, Enactments enabling prisoners in proper cases to obtain new trials; and 10, Provisions altering the law to a considerable extent as to the costs of prosecutions. Hon. Members would recollect that the Criminal Code was brought to the attention of the House for the first time in 1878. A Bill was then introduced which had been prepared by Sir James Stephen—now Mr. Justice Stephen—and which was founded on that admirable work called *A Digest of the Criminal Law*, which, after expending upon it many years of deep thought and patient toil, that gentleman presented to the public. Owing to the pressure of Public Business, the Bill of 1878, though favourably received, could not be proceeded with. After the close of the Session of 1878, the Government submitted the measure to the examination of a Commission composed of lawyers of the greatest eminence—namely, Lord Blackburn, Mr. Justice Lush, Mr. Justice Barry, and Sir James Stephen. The object the Government had in view when this Commission was appointed was to subject the all-important measure with which they were dealing to a most thorough and searching examination and criticism. As it was proposed to give in the Code a succinct statement of the law, it was obvious that it was most desirable that the accuracy of such statement should be ascertained and vouched by men of the highest authority; and as it was proposed by the Code to alter in several respects the existing law, it was obvious that it was most desirable that the alterations should be considered by those who were, from their training, experience, and ability, fitted to form a judgment upon them. The Commissioners entered upon their labours, and continued them, without intermission, for many months. During this period every provision of the Code, indeed, he might say almost every word, was made the subject of the most minute and careful consideration. Very extensive alterations were made in the structure of the Bill, although the foundations upon which it rested remained undisturbed; much matter was expunged, and much fresh matter was introduced. The more he had examined the Criminal Code Bill, the more he had sifted and scrutinized its provisions, the more forcibly had his mind been impressed with the enormous amount of labour the Commissioners bestowed upon it. It was impossible for anyone, even the most experienced lawyer, unless he had devoted himself to the subject, and had made it, for a time at all events, his especial study, thoroughly to appreciate the pains taken by the Commissioners with the work they undertook to perform. At length the task of the Commissioners was completed. They finally settled the draft Bill, and reported to Her Majesty the result of their deliberations. The Bill thus settled by the Commissioners was introduced in that House last Session some time after Parliament had assembled. Unfortunately, owing to causes to which it was not necessary for him to refer, very little opportunity for a discussion of the measure presented itself. However, although the provisions of the measure were not made the subject of debate, such as he could have wished for it, nevertheless the Bill excited great attention and interest both in and out of Parliament. Very many hon. and learned Members, and many hon. Gentlemen who were not in the law, but who took an interest in the administration of justice in this country, studied the measure with the greatest possible care, and proposed a variety of Amendments; some of these were formulated and placed on the Notice Paper; and, furthermore, men outside Parliament—men of great eminence and experience—also subjected the Code to searching criticism, and suggested several alterations which they considered would be improvements. Among those who devoted themselves to a careful investigation of the subject was, as the House would well remember, the Lord Chief Justice of England, who, in June last, addressed to him, as the Member of the Government who had charge of the Bill, a long letter containing criticisms upon the earlier parts of the Bill of a most valuable character; and in this letter, which the House would remember he had caused, as soon as he received it, to be made a Parliamentary Paper, his Lordship had been good enough to promise further letters, in which he would deal with other portions of the subject. This promise had, he was happy to say, been to a certain extent fulfilled; for only the other day he received from his Lordship a long letter of criticisms upon some portions of the Bill, and he had every reason to believe that he should be favoured with other letters on the remaining parts of the measure in the course of a few weeks. He (the Attorney General) was not surprised that, notwithstanding all the care and pains which had been bestowed upon it, the great work of the Commissioners, or rather, he should say, the great work of Sir James Stephen, revised and corrected and amplified by the Commissioners, was subjected to the criticisms to which he had referred, and that suggestions for its amendment should have been made. The fact was that upon a subject of such nicety, such intricacy, such difficulty, it was impossible for any set of men, however able, however learned and experienced, to frame a Bill, which would be a perfect Bill, entirely free from objection, and incapable of improvement. But he was justified in saying that most of the criticisms to which he had alluded were, however, directed much more to the form than to the substance of the Bill. But little objection was made to the statement of the existing law which the Bill contained, nor was much objection made to the alterations in the law recommended by the Commissioners. It was thought, however, that a good deal of improvement might be effected in the drafting of the Bill. It was said that the arrangement of the clauses might be considerably improved, that many clauses might be very much condensed and simplified, and that some of the definitions of crimes might be rendered a good deal clearer. These suggestions were brought to the attention of the Government and considered carefully, and the Government came to the resolution that while they would not allow any alteration in the substance of the Bill, they were quite willing, nay, anxious, to avail themselves of all the suggestions for such alterations in the form, if the carrying of them out would really improve the measure in that respect. It consequently fell to his lot to consider the Code as it issued from the hands of the Commissioners more carefully, if that was possible, than before, together with the proposals made for its alteration. In the task which thus devolved upon him he had the assistance of Gentlemen upon whose judgment he could confidently rely, and in future discussions he would have an opportunity of mentioning the names of some of those by whom he had been assisted. He might, however, mention at once that the acumen, zeal, and patience displayed by the hon. and learned Member for Chatham (Mr. Gorst), who was one of those Gentlemen, had filled him with admiration, and on behalf of the Government he begged to thank the hon. and learned Gentleman for his services. The result of the investigation that was thus made of the Bill, and of the various proposals for its amendment, was that certain alterations in the drafting were effected—alterations in form and not in substance, resulting in the Bill being presented in a somewhat neater garb than before. He had submitted to the Commissioners from time to time the drafts which were prepared, and he had obtained from them their approval of the great bulk of the alterations that had been made. The Commissioners authorized him to state explicitly that the Bill was still in substance their measure, and that they thought that it might be introduced into the House as such. There were certain matters about which they had suggested alterations, which would be more easily dealt with in the Select Committee to which he proposed to refer it, and who would, no doubt, adopt them. When hon. Members should come to consider the measure they would find that the Schedule of enactments to be repealed, which formed the concluding part of the Bill of 1879, had been excluded from the present measure, the reason being that the Government thought it would be more desirable to introduce that Schedule into a separate Bill, which would be brought in during the present Session. The view of the Government was that in this way more time could be given to the preparation of this Schedule, and the more time that could be given to it the better. During the course of every discussion upon the Bill, either in Committee or before the House, fresh enactments which might be repealed would be disclosed. The Government, therefore, thought it would be better and simpler on the whole to have the repeal enactments in a separate Schedule. It only remained to add that if the Bill were read a second time he proposed to refer it to a Select Committee, upon which he should place the names of the most eminent lawyers in the House, and of statesmen of great eminence. The object of the Government in taking this course was to have the measure subjected afresh to severe criticism, and thus to make it, if possible, a perfect Bill. Personally, he was exceedingly anxious that the Bill should pass into law during this Session; but he was not insensible of the difficulties which must attend the passing of so large a measure, containing nearly 500 sections. Therefore, if it was admissible for him to do so, he should ask that the Select Committee which he proposed should be appointed should be armed with power to divide the measure into a number of Bills, if they should think proper so to divide it. He trusted that by adopting this course, if by mischance he should not be able to get the whole Bill passed this Session, a substantial portion of the measure might become law. He begged, in conclusion, to move the second reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Attorney General.*)

SIR HENRY JAMES thought the Government had taken every possible step they could take to bring the measure into a shape that would commend it to the House; and the course now proposed to be pursued would also, in his opinion, be approved by hon. Members. It would not, however, be without interest to look at its history, and see how it had grown to its present dimensions. When the work of Mr. Justice Stephen was brought before the House in 1878 he believed they all felt that he was entitled not only to great credit, but to the gratitude of the House, for having made the attempt to codify the Criminal Law. But appeals were made to hon. Members both in and out of the House to accept the measure then framed as it stood, and they were told that it would be regarded as obstruction if the measure were not accepted in its entirety as then drawn, if it were not accepted. He thought, however, it had been proved—and his hon. and learned Friend would probably agree with him—that it would have been almost a calamity if the Bill had been accepted in the crude shape in which it was produced. Again, in 1879, notwithstanding the labours of the Commissioners, his hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General found it necessary not to proceed with haste in legislating on the subject, though he had almost scolded him (Sir Henry James) for hinting at such a possibility. His hon. and learned Friend had apparently found that the Common Law of England could not be consolidated, certainly not codified, without great consideration. But matters had since progressed. As soon as the Commissioners had performed their duty, undoubtedly in the most able manner, the Chief Justice of England brought his great acumen and knowledge to bear upon the subject, and pointed out defects which ought to be remedied. The hon. and learned Attorney General had accepted to a great extent those suggestions, and he hoped the promise made of further suggestions would be fulfilled when the Bill was referred to the Select Committee. He heard one suggestion by his hon. and learned Friend with great satisfaction. Last year he suggested that the Bill of 500 clauses should be divided into sections, and that they should be content to pass them piecemeal one Session after another. His hon. and learned Friend seemed to think that it would not be more difficult to dispose of such a measure than the Merchant Shipping Bill of 1854. It should, however, be remembered that that Bill dealt with only one subject, while this Bill dealt with many of great political and social importance. But, upon reflection, his hon. and learned Friend, he was happy to find, now thought it was safest to pursue the course he had suggested—that the Committee should have power to divide the measure into several Bills or sections, and that the House should pass as many as they could during the present Session, with the view of consolidating them when all had passed. His hon. and learned Friend stated that he had dealt with the arrangement of the Bill rather than the substance; but, notwithstanding the great learning of those who formed the Royal Commission, the House would find it necessary to revise some portions of their work. It was the duty of the House to do so, and its duty alone. When they came to consider the definition of high treason, what was sedition, what was an unlawful assembly, and the whole question of punishments, they would have to consider whether the legislation would be beneficial which merely perpetuated that which had formerly existed. Another subject was open to discussion—whether there should be class juries. He mentioned these topics only by way of example, as justifying the course adopted by his hon. and learned Friend of dealing with the Bill in different sections. The Commissioners had not apparently felt it their duty to exercise their feelings of humanity or judgment as politicians, but had, in most cases, merely consolidated the law as it existed. He had only one practical suggestion to make—that his hon. and learned Friend should inform the House what alterations had been made in the law; what was new in the Bill, and what was old, so that they might bring their judgments to bear upon the expediency, either of maintaining the one, or giving effect to the other. Speaking for himself, and for many of his hon. and learned Friends on that side of the House, he desired to say that, looking at the course which the Government had taken in order to form a wise measure of codification, they would be ready to give their best assistance, with the view of saving as much public time as possible, and the hope of carrying that Session a Bill which he hoped would prove beneficial to the public. If his hon. and learned Friend would accept their aid, they should be disposed to reduce their criticism, not to minute matters, but to what was substantial.

Mr. HOPWOOD apprehended that the hon. and learned Attorney General was placing a work on the shoulders of the Select Committee which some of them were not prepared to undertake, because they had not sufficiently studied the matter. It would be necessary to proceed cautiously. There might be some difference of opinion on many of the points urged by the hon. and learned Member for Taunton (Sir Henry James); but they were well worthy of consideration. For instance, with regard to Unlawful Assembly, he did not find under the old precedents any such punishable offence, unless there were riotous proceedings, and then punishment might follow. Under this Bill, however, a harmless gathering—he might say, a cricket match—might, under certain circumstances, be turned into an unlawful assembly, and the persons attending it be punished. There must be much debate on that and many other points—such, for instance, as their old friend flogging, to which a considerable increase was given, the Law of Libel, and insanity, in murder cases. These would require the very closest attention from the Select Committee, the law being in some instances formulated for the first time. In his opinion, the suggestion of the hon. and learned Member for Taunton, that the Bill should be taken in compartments or sections, was a wise one. The Judges who were engaged on the work had arrived at a conclusion which would be a substantial stepping-stone for the House; but, nevertheless, the revision of such a work would occupy a considerable time. He hoped ample time would be afforded for the discussion of this very great and valuable measure.

MR. PAGET thought the subject should be discussed in a practical spirit, and not from the point of view taken by those who desired Utopian perfection. If all the questions of principle involved in the re-enactment of the law relating to high treason, unlawful assemblies, the composition of juries, libel, insanity, and other matters which had been mentioned were to be debated in the Committee and again when the Bill came before the House, they might discard as impracticable the project of passing a Criminal Code. A great point would be gained if the Code did nothing more than declare the law as it stood. He appealed to hon. and learned Gentlemen to put aside their individual bias in this matter, and by that means they would do a service to their country, though it might be at the cost of some violence to their own feelings. He ventured to think that no Bill which had been brought before the House in recent years was of so much importance as this one. He did not, however, see how it was possible to deal satisfactorily in one measure with so many different subjects, if the views of the hon. and learned Members who had addressed the House were accepted, and the whole of the Criminal Law were to be passed in review and made the subject of amendment. He advised the Government to be content for the present with a declaratory scheme, including only such Amendments as would be likely to meet with general acceptance.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL said, that, having had a good deal to do with Criminal Codes in another part of the world, he wished to say a few words with respect to one view of the subject. He was not very clear as to the nature of the Bill. They all knew that consolidating the law was a very different thing from framing a Code. A Code was not a mere consolidation; but the formation of a body of law drawing its materials, not solely from the existing law in this country, but from the law of other parts of the world, so as to form as far as they could a perfect Code of Law. He differed very much from the observations of the hon. Member who had just spoken (Mr. Paget). He held that it should be something more than a consolidation—that it should be a real Code. It was to be regretted that it was only to be a Code for one part of the Kingdom only, and not for the whole of the United Kingdom. There would be a great advantage in having the new Code extending to the whole Kingdom. He need not remind the House that there was a part of the United Kingdom called Scotland, whose Criminal Law was of great merit, and possessed some considerable advantages over the law of England. He held that there would be great advantage to England if in this codification of its law several principles of Scotch law were introduced. He felt much regret, when a great work of this kind was undertaken, that we were not going to have what the great countries of Europe, France and Germany had—a Code of Law which should be a general Code for the whole of the United Kingdom. He ventured to think there were one or two subjects in respect of which great advantage might be derived from the law of Scotland. The hon. and learned Attorney General had alluded to the Amendment proposed in regard to juries; but he did not know that the hon. and learned Gentleman proposed any radical change. He did not understand that it was intended to get rid of the necessity for unanimity on the part of juries which the English law required. The Scotch law did not require unanimity, and in that respect the Scotch law had worked exceedingly well. The hon. and learned Gentleman had not alluded either to the examination of the accused, in respect to which Scotland had also an advantage over England. When originally brought in, the Bill proposed examination of the accused. If the hon. and learned Gentleman compared the law of Scotland with that of England in this respect, he would find that the former country had a great advantage over the latter. He was afraid it could hardly be accomplished that Session; but he could not help expressing, as a Scotch Member, regret that they were not to have a Code which should be a Code for the whole of the United Kingdom.

SIR THOMAS CHAMBERS did not think it possible for greater pains to be taken to pass a Code than were taken in this matter. One of the most accomplished lawyers had prepared it, and it had afterwards been referred to three most learned and experienced Judges, assisted by its author. The speech of the hon. Member for East Somerset (Mr. Paget) was, however, very discouraging, because the hon. Gentleman said that if presented as a whole it would be quite impossible it should be passed by the House of Commons. But a mere consolidation would be a convenience only for practitioners, and they did not require it much, for they had got the law at their fingers' ends, or knew where to find it. A mere consolidation, therefore, was not of much moment. But if new provisions and alterations in the Criminal Law were introduced that House would fail in its duty if it allowed such changes to pass *sub silentio.* Any measure, therefore, going beyond that, to deal with such momentous matters as were involved in the present Bill, ought to be put forward only under circumstances which would admit of it being thoroughly discussed. He never could bring himself to believe that a Criminal Code could be of much use. It was a great mistake to suppose that, as soon as you had the Code, you could open the book and ascertain the law with certainty. The instant it was passed a series of points would be remitted to the Court for Crown Cases Reserved, and for 25 years we should have as many volumes of decisions. At least, if we had not, our experience would be contrary to our own experience and to that of the whole world. Speaking broadly, our condition as to crime was not unsatisfactory, considering the increase of the population. Crimes against which the efficiency of the police afforded protection were diminishing; and the increase was in frauds, embezzlements, and libels, against which the efficiency of the police did not afford protection. If it was desirable to introduce better definitions of murder, or to abolish the distinction between felonies and misdemeanours, these things could be done by single clauses; but he was very doubtful whether, in passing a larger measure, they would turn out a very satisfactory piece of work. He thought the Code might be divided into sections, and considered and discussed in that way. He would assist in perfecting the Bill as far as possible; but he was not sanguine as to any very great results being obtained.

MR. ONSLOW said, that throughout the country there was a general feeling that a Criminal Code was urgently required, and that the passing of such a Bill would confer a great boon upon the whole of the community. He hoped that there would be a good representation of laymen on the Committee. Whatever was done, he feared it would be impossible to pass a complete measure in any one Session, even if the Committee sat *die in diem.* He hoped, at any rate, that this would not be taken up as a Party question.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the said Bill be referred to a Select Committee." — (*Mr. Attorney General.*)

SIR HENRY JAMES asked whether it was to be a large or a small Committee?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir JOHN HOLKER) said, it must necessarily be a large one, including many of the most eminent lawyers of the House. He should be quite prepared to furnish the Members of the Committee—or even of the House—with a statement of that which was new in the Bill.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *referred* to a Select Committee.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1879-80.

COMMITTEE.

SUPPLY—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CLASS I.—PUBLIC WORKS AND BUILDINGS.

(1.) £2,924, Royal Palaces.

MR. CHILDERS said, that he did not propose to take any exception to that particular Vote, or, indeed, to criticize the items at that period of the Committee; but he thought there was a question which it had been customary to put, either to the hon. Baronet the Secretary to the

Treasury or to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in connection with the Committee, and which had, indeed, sometimes been answered before they had been published. The matter did not appear in any part of the Estimates, nor had any information been given on the subject. Last year a certain amount of additional Estimates was voted; and the addition proposed this year amounted to a considerable sum—namely, £500,000. Now, the question which it would be interesting to the House to have some information upon and which he could not help thinking the hon. Baronet the Secretary to the Treasury ought to explain was this—what was the estimated saving in the Civil Service expenditure to be set off against this large Vote? He remembered last year that the amount was stated distinctly; and it was a matter of considerable importance to know, as the right hon. Gentleman had already admitted that there would be a heavy deficit, how much would be added to the expenditure estimated for in the Budget of last year. That information was necessary, in order that they might know what the general effect of these particular Votes would be on the deficit.

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON said, that he was unable to give the exact figures that the right hon. Gentleman required; but he could state that the saving would amount to a very considerable sum, and would affect materially the ordinary Supplementary Estimates of the year. He would point out to the Committee that the Supplementary Estimates of this year were excessive in one or two items. Amongst others, there was an item for relief works amounting to about £5,000. Those amounts had raised the Supplementary Estimates this year, but about £209,000 had been, or was expected to be, received on the other side of the account; and thus, although many of the items were excessive, the total amount, as compared with the amount of extra receipts, was reduced below that of last year.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR said, that the objection he entertained to the Supplementary Estimates was that they destroyed all comparison between the Estimate of the current year 1879-80 and the sum expended in the past year 1878-9, for which accounts had been rendered. He had gone very carefully over the proposed Supplementary Estimates, and he must say that a very large portion of the money now required was for expenditure which could have been foreseen, and ought to have been estimated for in the original Estimates. He would put it to the hon. Baronet the Secretary to the Treasury, whether it was right to bring forward these new items at the end of the year? He thought the House had great reason to complain of the heads of Departments for the miscalculations they made, and the House ought to refuse to give them any additional sums beyond those estimated for at the beginning of last year. Until such time as the new Estimates for 1880-1 were brought in, very little inconvenience would result from refusing these supplemental demands. He had occasion to complain of the same matter last year—in fact, he had complained ever since he had been in the House; and he had opposed, not only the Supplementary Estimates, but the excessive Estimates brought forward at the end of the year long after the year had closed. In his opinion, the hon. Baronet ought to control Departments, and prevent them making new demands arising from defective calculations.

Vote *agreed to.*

(2.) £300, Marlborough House.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR remarked, that the truth of what he had previously said was more especially illustrated by this Vote. No doubt, it was a small sum, and he, for one, was anxious to do everything for the convenience of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales; but surely this amount might have been included in the original Estimates, as it was a sum which was obviously necessary for the convenience of the Prince.

MR. GERARD NOEL said, that it was impossible to foresee this expenditure.

Vote *agreed to.*

(3.) £5,500, Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens.

(4.) £6,700, Public Buildings.

(5.) £1,400, Furniture of Public Offices.

(6.) £150, Metropolitan Police Court Buildings.

(7.) £36,404, New Courts of Justice and Offices.

Mr. WHITWELL said, that under the letter "D" they found it stated that the additional sum of £20,000 was required for furniture of the New Courts of Justice. He should like to know whether the Committee was to understand that the whole expense of the furniture and fittings for the New Courts of Justice was still to be estimated for—by how much it had exceeded the cost originally provided for?

Mr. GERARD NOEL said, that the old furniture had been used to as large an extent as was possible; but it had been found necessary to incur a large amount of additional expense for new furniture.

Mr. GREGORY thought it would be satisfactory to the Committee if the hon. Gentleman would give some information as to the present state of completion of the new buildings. A considerable portion was fitted up and inhabited, and, in his opinion, the buildings, so far as they went, were well adapted to the purposes for which they were intended, and afforded great facilities for the transaction of business; but he should like to see them made of still greater use than they were. A separation had taken place, for instance, between the offices of the two Departments of the Paymaster General and the Registrar of the Court of Chancery. At present, a suitor was obliged to run from one office to another; when he had a cheque paid to him in Chancery Lane he probably had to go down to Carey Street or Lincoln's Inn Fields to obtain payment for it, or in case any alteration was required of the order under which he received it. It would be desirable for the convenience of the public that those offices should be immediately brought together. The Paymaster General at present occupied premises in Stone Buildings; so soon as those offices could be brought together the purchase money would be recouped the country from Lincoln's Inn. It was very desirable that that event should take place as soon as soon as possible. He believed that the offices for the Paymaster General were now ready for occupation. He thought it would be very desirable if the right hon. Gentleman would give the Committee some information as to when the Courts would be completed and could be occupied. At present, a great inconvenience was sustained, and solicitors were at a loss to know where to find the various offices. When the whole of the Courts and offices could be brought together it would be a great convenience to the public.

Mr. GERARD NOEL said, that the eastern portion of the building was already in the possession of various Departments. Rapid progress was being made with the remainder of the works, and at the end of 1881 he trusted the whole building would be ready for the occupation of the different Courts. With regard to the separation of the different Departments, he might inform the hon. Member for East Sussex (Mr. Gregory) that the question of bringing the offices together was under the consideration of the Lord Chancellor.

Mr. CHILDERS observed, that the question raised by the hon. Member for East Sussex was a very important one. It was very essential that the buildings should be made ready for occupation as soon as possible. He rose for the purpose of asking a question with regard to the cost of the buildings. In 1865-6 a very careful Estimate was made for the building of the New Courts of Justice, and it was arranged that they should be erected partly from money derived from the capitalized value of certain funds applicable for the purpose, and partly from other sources. He did not think that from 1865-80 anyone had asked how far that Estimate would be verified, or whether the very large sum which had to be expended in concentrating the Courts of Justice had been recouped out of the sum mentioned in the Estimate of 1866? The question was really very important, for it involved millions; and he thought it would be more satisfactory if the hon. Baronet the Secretary to the Treasury would look into the matter, and would lay a Paper on the subject before the House.

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON agreed with the right hon. Member for Pontefract (Mr. Childers) that the information to which he had referred would be of great interest to the Committee, and that he would endeavour to supply it on Report, or at some subsequent stage of the Estimates. He did not like to pledge himself upon the point raised, and would rather reserve his reply until it could be given more correctly. The subject had been brought before the House of Commons for the first time during the last Session, when he remembered that the Supplementary Estimates were not sufficiently accurate to afford the required information.

MR. RYLANDS said, that the original Estimate under this Vote amounted to £120,000. And now an additional sum was required amounting to £36,404, an increase of considerably more than 25 per cent upon the amount originally estimated for. He wished to call the attention of the Government to the fact that hon. Members expected that, when the Civil Service Estimates were taken, due care should be exercised that the items were of such a character as might be relied upon, and that whenever there was a large increase hon. Members were entitled to be satisfied that such increase in the expenditure had been of such an unexpected character as to justify the Department in not including them in the original Estimates. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gerard Noel) would say whether the progress of the work under sub-head B had been considerably in excess of the reasonable expectations of the Department, and how it was that when the original Estimate was made no amount was put down for fittings or furniture? Was it a fact that a part of the building had been completed earlier than had been expected, and that furniture had been required in consequence which was not originally estimated for?

MR. GERARD NOEL said, that there had been a long frost, accompanied by strikes, in the year 1878, which latter, he was happy to say, were concluded; and the works had, therefore, proceeded much more rapidly during the present year than they had during the last. They had used all the old furniture which they possibly could; but it was found that some fresh furniture should be supplied.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR, with regard to the item of £12,000 for new furniture, pointed out that it was entirely a new one, and had made its appearance for the first time in the Estimates for this building; but, as it had never existed before, the Committee would perceive that it could not be in the nature of a Supplementary Estimate. Supplementary Estimates of this nature applied rather to money demanded for the purpose of extending or continuing works originally estimated for. However, considering that sub-head B in the present Estimates did include this charge for new furniture, he regretted that more foresight had not been exercised by including the item in the original Estimates. He begged to ask the hon. Gentleman the Chief Commissioner of Works at what date he discovered that the building would be occupied in the course of the year, and when it was that the present Estimate was admitted for the purpose of supplying additional furniture? The point which was raised by the appearance for the first time of this item in the Supplementary Estimates was one that he had repeatedly complained of, and it was a fact that the Public Accounts Committee passed these Supplementary Estimates from year to year, and never brought to the notice of the House the objectionable practice of including items in additional Estimates after the House had long passed the original Estimates. Objection was made last year by several hon. Members to the practice of the Government of coming down to the House with two or three Supplementary Estimates. This practice was always objectionable, and for several years he had pointed out the necessity of controlling Departments, and that no Department should get one farthing more than was absolutely required. He knew by his own experience that if a controlling power were exercised over Departments, they could easily regulate the amounts of money demanded in the original Estimates. He, therefore, repeated his question to the right hon. Gentleman, as to when he discovered it was necessary to supply the additional furniture?

MR. GERARD NOEL said, that the Estimates were prepared in January last year; but it was not until June that the Department became aware that the furniture would be required.

MR. DILLWYN pointed out that they had received no sufficient Estimate of the cost of the new furniture; he thought they had a right to complain of this omission, and to insist that the Committee should always receive a full statement of expenditure. Hon. Members found themselves, under the present system, committed to an expenditure by small Votes being taken, and they afterwards learned that these formed only a portion of the whole Expenditure. The Committee ought, in his opinion, to consider this subject well, and to ascertain whether Votes taken were for a part or the whole of any particular scheme. To him it appeared very like part of a system; and, with regard to this particular item, the House would hereafter be called upon to pay a very large sum for extra furniture. At that time, if any hon. Member asked what it was for, he would probably receive as a reply—"Oh, you voted that in the Supplementary Estimates of last year." He considered that no new expense should be allowed to be included in the Supplementary Estimates. The case before the Committee was a very strong one as bearing upon this point, and the amount asked for appeared to him to be but the first item of a very large expenditure.

Mr. GERARD NOEL replied to the hon. Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn) that it was believed the building would not have been finished until several months after it was completed; there was, therefore, no reason at the time of preparing the last Estimates to suppose that the furniture would be required. He reminded the Committee that the building was of an enormous size, containing as it did 250 rooms, besides galleries and corridors. It was, therefore, impossible to estimate what would be required until the building was completed. He had not the least idea at that moment what would be the total expense in respect of furniture.

Mr. GREGORY said, that all the old furniture available had been made use of. The building was, no doubt, a very large one, and contained a great number of offices, as well as rooms, very well adapted to their respective purposes. The offices had been occupied as rapidly as they could be, and, no doubt, the Government had found in the case of a building taken possession of in that way, it was extremely difficult to ascertain what would be required in the various offices. No doubt there would be a further outlay in respect of the furniture which it would be found necessary to supply. A great number of offices had already been occupied.

Mr. DILLWYN did not for one moment complain of the expense, being, of course, agreed that the furniture ought to be supplied, and in a proper manner; all he complained of was that the Papers relating to the expenditure which was being incurred had not been laid upon the Table of the House, for he thought that the Committee ought to have some idea of the amount that would be required before they were called upon to vote.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL could not see the impossibility which the hon. Gentleman the head of the Department had said existed, of forming an idea of the total expenditure under this head. He thought that when the Estimates were reached they should have a statement of the expenditure already incurred, and that which was about to be incurred.

Vote *agreed to.*

(8.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £11,111, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1880, for the Erection, Repairs, and Maintenance of the several Public Buildings under the Department of the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland."

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY asked for an explanation of the item of £1,500 under letter B?

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON said, that the amount represented the excess which had been carried out in connection with the National Education Question for school purposes.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY said, he would have to move the reduction of this Vote by the sum of £2,040, said to have been incurred in providing temporary barracks in certain parts of Ireland for the Constabulary during the late operations in the North of Ireland. The duty of the Constabulary, it appeared, had consisted, for the most part, in assisting the bailiffs in the service of ejectments and various processes of law. These duties had certainly never been contemplated at the first formation of this force, and he thought Irish Members had a right to object to their employment in these capacities. It would be useless for him, and he did not intend to go into the question as to whether the amount was correct; but he pointed out to the Committee that the necessity for the employment of the Constabulary in those districts of Ireland where the temporary barracks had been provided had arisen from want of attention on the part of the Government, and from the unsatisfactory state of the law. He, therefore, begged leave to move the reduction of this Vote by the sum of £2,040

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £9,071, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1880, for the Erection, Repairs, and Maintenance of the several Public Buildings under the Department of the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland."—(*Mr. O'Shaughnessy.*)

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON could not consent to the striking out of the amount proposed by the hon. and learned Member (Mr. O'Shaughnessy). It had been found absolutely necessary to supplement the original Estimate for police in Ireland by this amount, for providing barracks in places where no accommodation existed. He would not go into the large question raised by the hon. Member as to the original cause of this necessity; but that necessity had arisen, and the barracks had been provided in the districts to which it had been found necessary to move the force. The Government, in consequence, were obliged to come to the House to sanction an amount for the cost of these barracks.

MR. SHAW said, the explanation of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury was not satisfactory. It had not been sufficiently understood or explained that a portion of the Constabulary had been employed for the protection of private parties in some parts of the country, whose owners imagined themselves not to be free from danger, and, in consequence, applied for the police. Under these circumstances, he thought it would be well to make the gentlemen who had applied for the assistance of the police pay for the police accommodation which had in consequence to be provided. It was doubtful, in his opinion, whether it was wise to move the Constabulary about from one part of the country to another for the purposes of serving ejectments and notices to quit; at all events, the landlords who required their services ought to pay for them. The hon. and learned Member for Limerick (Mr. O'Shaughnessy) was quite right in calling the attention of the House to this subject; but he hoped that the Motion would not be pressed to a division.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY was perfectly willing to accept the advice of his hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw), not to press his Amendment.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question again proposed.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR referred to the item of £870 for poplin on account of the State apartments. On looking at the previous Estimate, he could not find that any such item had appeared before. This was another instance where a new demand had arisen, and had been put into the Supplementary Estimates. The course pursued with respect to the two items which had been treated in this manner was one which, in his opinion, ought never to be resorted to so far as the Supplementary Estimates were concerned, and the amount ought to have been kept back until the next Estimates were prepared. He desired to know from the Secretary to the Treasury how it was that this new demand had been made?

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON regretted that he had been mainly responsible for the introduction of this charge. On more than one occasion, the absolute necessity of re-furnishing the particular State apartments referred to had presented itself; and it had been suggested that, in order to give employment to a certain class of workmen, they might avail themselves of the necessity which had really arisen in order to afford some assistance to a particular trade which had been in a state of considerable depression and distress. He had therefore sanctioned, after the Estimates of last year had been passed, an amount to be included in the present Supplementary Estimates for the purpose of furnishing the apartments with a particular material, which it was said would give a stimulus to the trade. The Estimates for this particular work had always been very much in excess of the amount which the Government had sanctioned in the present instance, and he was happy to say that the result of the expenditure had been considered in Ireland to be quite satisfactory.

MR. WHITWELL inquired what it was that the Government had purchased under letter A? As far as he could make out, it seemed that they had purchased an interest in a house. That, again, was not a supplementary item; it was a new demand altogether. He thought it would be important to the Committee to know, with regard to this, whether it was but the commencement of a series of further expenditure? They had, it appeared, only bought an interest in the house, and were only part-owners, for the Estimate did not say that the purchase had been made. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury would inform the Committee as to what had been actually purchased. There was another question—namely, the charge for keeping up and maintaining buildings, under which head there appeared to be a deficiency of £2,000. His hon. Friends near him were quite ignorant of the nature of the demand for inspection officers, and perhaps the Secretary to the Treasury would inform the Committee upon this point.

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON said, the interest in the house alluded to had been bought with a view to its being used in connection with the Science and Art Collection. There were certain buildings which it would be necessary to acquire, as the leases fell in, for the purpose of improving the Science and Art Museum. With regard to the estimated deficiency to which the hon. Member for Kendal (Mr. Whitwell) had called his attention, the charge was entirely distinct from the special services which had appeared in former Estimates, and was distinctly for general services rendered.

Mr. DILLWYN pointed out the original Estimate was for the sum of £32.

General Sir GEORGE BALFOUR said, that owing to the increase in the Expenditure over the sum in the original Estimates they had a new charge of £1,400 for this one building. He quite admitted all the Secretary to the Treasury had said with regard to the necessity of buying in buildings which might become available; but this system of making up the Civil Service Estimates with Supplemental Charges was one which the Committee of Public Accounts had always neglected to inquire into, and they never reported the defective manner in which those Estimates were prepared. He thought there would be an advantage in placing some military men at the Treasury to check the Civil charges in the manner followed of checking the military charges at the Treasury by means of civilians. Another reform was that of putting new blood upon the Committee of Public Accounts, who would, no doubt, point out some system which would be better than that at present existing for controlling expenditure. When hon. Members came to compare the Estimates of 1880-1 with those of 1879-80 they found the figures to be entirely different; and, as a matter of course, the comparison which ought easily to be made between one Estimate and another was rendered impossible.

Mr. RYLANDS remarked, that under sub-head C was an altogether unprecedented item. It seemed clear to him, from the particulars given, that the estimated deficiency was for purposes not stated in the sub-head. He thought it was a very rough-and-ready kind of way to put down a few hundreds or thousands for general deficiency. He should be glad if the hon. Baronet the Secretary to the Treasury would inform the Committee of what the deficiency consisted, and what the amount put down "portal inspection" was for.

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON said, that the portal inspection offices were those created under the Sanitary Act for the purpose of examining the cattle in Ireland. With regard to what had fallen from the hon. and gallant Gentleman as to the sum required for the purpose of the house at 3, Shelburne Place, he might observe that the Government had purchased merely an interest in that particular property, and that it could not justly be put down as a purchase of the property altogether. There were, he imagined, divers interests in that particular house, and it had become necessary to purchase a particular interest for the benefit of the country. Moreover, the smallness of the sum paid would indicate that it clearly did not represent the purchase of the house itself. If the hon. Member for Swansea was anxious to have further information on the subject he would promise to give it him upon Report.

General Sir GEORGE BALFOUR remarked, that no doubt it was quite right to purchase an interest in the house at Shelburne Place; but they were asked to grant a Vote on account of it without knowing anything of the particulars. They did not know the duration of the interest, or whether it would involve an expenditure of several more thousands.

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON thought that the most satisfactory way would be that he should add to the Estimates of the present year a full statement of the facts with regard to that particular house. He was unable to state more than he had done at the present time; but full information should be given.

MR. RYLANDS said, that he would like some further information as to the way in which a deficiency had arisen, and how much had been spent on the portal inspection offices?

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON observed, that the deficiency was due to a larger amount having been spent on general service and maintenance than was expected. The deficit was not owing to anything having been expended in new works.

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

(9.) £5,000, Shannon Navigation.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR remarked, that the sum of £8,000 was taken for these works in the Civil Service Estimates for 1880 and 1881, and the sum of £5,000 was now asked for to supplement the demands in the original Estimates of 1879-80. He believed that this was the third occasion on which the House had been asked to Vote additional sums for these works. During the last 40 years £200,000 had probably been spent on the Shannon Navigation, and to no purpose, for, so far from doing good, positive harm had resulted. Last year an hon. Member mentioned, as a result of the Expenditure on these works, that the grass land in the neighbourhood of the river had become dried up, owing to the water having been drawn off. He wished to ask the hon. Baronet the Secretary to the Treasury what actual good had been done, and how much further expenditure would be required for this costly river? It was very difficult to compare one year's expenditure with another, when sums were asked for by Supplementary Estimates.

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON said, that the reason why sums were asked for by Supplementary Estimates was in one respect due to the fact that the Secretary to the Treasury was required to produce the Estimates at an early day in the Session. The hon. and gallant Gentleman himself was particularly anxious that the Estimates should be laid before the House at the earliest possible period of the Session, and if that were done it would always be necessary to prepare Supplementary Estimates. He might state, with regard to this particular Vote, that the sum of £5,000 had been authorized to be expended on this navigation, because it would form one of the relief works in Ireland, and would afford employment to people in a part of the country where great distress existed.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR remarked, that he could bear testimony to the fact that the hon. Baronet had brought forward the Estimates at an early day, and he did not think there was any difference of opinion on that point.

Vote *agreed to.*

(10.) £8,386, Diplomatic and Consular Buildings.

MR. MONK asked whether the Embassy House at St. Petersburgh belonged to the British Government or was held on a lease for years? Last year the right hon. Gentleman had stated that it had become necessary to renew the lease. It seemed to him that the present was a very large sum to ask in addition to the £14,000 taken last year.

MR. GERARD NOEL said, that the hon. Member might recollect that when Lord Augustus Loftus took possession of the Embassy House at St. Petersburgh considerable changes were necessary. A part of the present sum was for furniture, and the remainder for other matters.

Vote *agreed to.*

CLASS II.—SALARIES AND EXPENSES OF PUBLIC DEPARTMENTS.

(11.) £1,250, Treasury.

MR. RYLANDS said, that on several occasions he had drawn attention to the fact that the Treasury had always required an additional Estimate on account of extra legal assistance. It would be found, on reference to the original Estimates, that £1,700 was voted for extra counsel to the Treasury. It did appear that a considerable amount of money was spent by the Treasury in giving employment to legal gentlemen beyond the amount authorized by Parliament. He thought that they had a reason to complain that the hon. Baronet invariably under-estimated this particular Department. Knowing the great anxiety of the hon. Baronet to keep down this particular expenditure when he made up his Estimates, still he thought that the amount of professional assistance which would be required should be originally estimated for.

Mr. MONK said, that the hon. Member for Burnley was perfectly right in objecting to this Vote. He had complained, year after year, that the Treasury had come for additional Votes for extra legal assistance. He believed that the fees paid by the Treasury for preparing Bills were extravagant. A large salary was paid to an hon. and learned Gentleman whose duty it was to prepare these Bills. No doubt, at times there was an extreme pressure on the Parliamentary counsel, and some extra assistance might be required. But it must be known to Her Majesty's Government, when preparing the Bills they proposed to bring forward, what amount of assistance would be required by the Parliamentary counsel. He thought that £1,700 voted last year, in addition to the salary paid, was a very large sum for preparing the Bills brought in by Her Majesty's Government. But now they were asked for an additional sum, and he felt inclined to move for a Return of the sums granted in respect of particular Bills prepared by counsel, the total amount of which was put down at £900. He thought it would be satisfactory to the Committee that they should know the reasons—which were, no doubt, good ones—why the hon. Baronet did not ask for this particular Vote in the Estimates last year.

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON said, that he was quite aware that the Secretary to the Treasury was very naturally blamed for under-estimating this particular Vote year after year. The reason that influenced the Treasury in so doing was a wish to keep down as far as possible the expenses. But when an Office brought in a particular measure it found it necessary to employ some draftsman possessing a special knowledge of the matter in question. That occurred more particularly with respect to legal measures; and he would draw the attention of the Committee to the Criminal Code Bill, which required very special preparation at the hands of the learned counsel since elevated to the Bench. The Bankruptcy Law Amendment Bill was also intrusted to persons skilled in that particular Department. There were other subjects on which they had also required special assistance—namely, Municipal Corporations and Rivers and the Railway Commission Bills. Those and other measures had rendered it necessary to pay in fees to counsel £900 in addition to the £1,700 estimated for last year. Moreover, at a certain period of the year, the Parliamentary counsel was very much overworked, and it was absolutely necessary to obtain outside assistance.

Mr. RYLANDS thought the explanation of the hon. Baronet was extremely unsatisfactory. The Criminal Code Bill, to which the hon. Baronet had referred, was a measure which had been before them in the previous year, and certainly did not cause this expenditure.

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON was aware that the Criminal Code Bill had now been prepared for some time; but he only alluded to it as an instance of a measure necessarily taken out of the Department.

Mr. RYLANDS remembered that the statements made last year represented that an enormous amount of professional labour had been expended on the Criminal Code Bill. Hon. Members admitted this; but they knew perfectly well that the labour having been completed and paid for, so far from justifying the present expenditure, justified him in asking the Secretary to the Treasury whether there were any other Bills in the hands of the Government which had not been laid on the Table of the House, and which required so large an amount of professional labour. The country paid for a staff of learned gentlemen to prepare Bills; but he was quite at a loss to see in the Bills which had been laid on the Table of the House any reason for the additional professional labour which seemed to have been employed by the Treasury. Reference had been made to the Municipal Corporations Bill and to the Railway Commission Bill which had been laid on the Table of the House; but those Bills were not of any magnitude, and in regard to the latter there was nothing in it that might not have been written in a few hours. The point he wished to impress upon the Treasury was that the Committee had a right to say that, having a permanent staff of highly-paid legal officials connected with the Treasury for the purpose of preparing Bills, the Committee had received no sound reason which would justify them in voting so large a sum for the work which ought to have been done in the Department.

MR. MONK thought that, with regard to the Municipal Corporations Bill, the Secretary to the Treasury had been a little chary in the information which he had given, and most wisely so, in regard to the evidence which had been taken before the Royal Commission, and which had not, up to that time, been presented to the House. But he (Mr. Monk) supposed that the truth of the matter was that the fees for legal services in question were in respect of certain Bills which, at the present moment, were reposing in the pigeon-holes of the Treasury. With regard to one of the Bills—the Railway Commission Bill—it had never been laid upon the Table of the House; indeed, it had never been introduced by the noble Lord the President of the Board of Trade. The noble Lord had informed the House on several occasions that he had the Bill ready to be brought in; but the Bill introduced last year, however, was only a continuance Bill. He maintained that if this £600, for which they were asked in the Supplementary Estimates, and the large sum for the Railway Commission Bill, were on account of Bills which had not been laid upon the Table of the House, they should have been brought before hon. Members in the Estimates for the present year, and not in the Supplementary Estimates.

MR. ASSHETON CROSS desired to bear his testimony to the fact that a very great amount of time and labour had been spent, and enormous difficulties undergone, with regard to the Army Discipline and Regulation Bill. Neither the hon. Member who had just sat down, nor anyone who had seen the labour and time expended, could wonder at the necessity for the employment of extra assistance.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR desired also to give his testimony with regard to the Army Discipline and Regulation Bill, which was, in his opinion, the worst that had ever been drafted. He asked the Secretary to the Treasury (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson) whether he would supplement the statement that he had made, and let the Committee know what had been the cost of the several Bills, on account of which money for extra legal assistance had been paid, and whether he would also tell them what Bills had been prepared by the establishment of the Office, and for which no expense had accrued. Hon. Members would then see clearly the amount of work that had been performed by the costly staff kept up permanently. In many cases the Bills presented to the House of Commons were nothing better than waste paper, and were not satisfactory until they had been amended and passed by Members.

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON thought he should be more imprudent than he had already been, were he to promise the hon. Member any such Return as he proposed to move for. Of course, he could make at that moment no such statement to the House. There must be a certain amount of work done, and it had been found in some cases that the officers especially adapted to it had been overworked—so much so as to render it necessary to obtain outside assistance in the preparation of Bills.

MR. RYLANDS was unable to consider that the explanation given by the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury was satisfactory.

Vote *agreed to.*

(12.) £2,400, Foreign Office.

MR. H. SAMUELSON drew the attention of the Committee to the fact that in Class 2, Vote 5, there was an additional sum charged for telegrams, and that in the last line there was another additional sum which, with the amount he had already referred to, made an increase of £4,500 upon the amount of last year. There would have been, when they had voted this money, £17,200 upon telegrams alone. These two sums being of the same character, he would like to know why a sum for Foreign Office telegrams was charged in two different Votes?

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON said, that the reason for this distinction was that one of the items of expenditure was incurred in respect of telegrams sent by the Foreign Office, and that the next item under Clause 5 was for telegrams in connection with the different Commissions abroad. The latter charge was, therefore, accounted for under the Diplomatic Vote.

Vote *agreed to.*

(13.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £2,921, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1880, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Charity Commission for England and Wales."

Mr. W. H. JAMES desired to point out why, in his opinion, this Vote should not appear on the Estimates. He thought that the whole of the Charities of the country were subject to a considerable amount of unnecessary management, and that while, perhaps, they had done a certain amount of good, they had also been the cause of a certain amount of mischief. There was a strong opinion that the expenses of the Commission should not be borne by the Consolidated Fund, but by the Charities themselves. The House had on two occasions passed a Resolution last year on the subject. With regard to the Resolution introduced by himself, he had accepted an Amendment to refer the matter to a Select Committee, to which, however, the Chancellor of the Exchequer objected, on the ground that the Government were determined to do something before another year elapsed. Upon that, the Charities' Accounts and Expenses Bill was introduced and passed a second reading. When the Bill went into Committee, however, it was opposed by the hon. Member for Worcester, who had given Notice of opposition; after that a powerful deputation had attended upon the right hon. Gentleman, composed of deans, archdeacons, and mayors, who represented that disastrous results would ensue if the Bill were passed. Up to that time no opposition had appeared on the Notice Paper, with the exception of that of the hon. Member for Worcester; but afterwards, Notice of opposition was given by a number of Gentlemen more or less connected with the City of London—that was to say, by the hon. Member for the City, the hon. Member for Lambeth, the learned Recorder, and by the hon. Members for Essex, the Tower Hamlets, and Leeds. The Government, in consequence, withdrew the measure; but he (Mr. W. H. James) understood the Chancellor of the Exchequer at that time to say that the question would be re-introduced early at the commencement of the present Session. He had asked a Question upon this subject a few days previously, and received a reply to the effect that the Government intended to do nothing in the matter. Thus the Government were placing the House in an anomalous position by ignoring the Resolution passed by the House on the understanding that the Government should re-introduce the Bill, and by yielding to the pressure brought to bear upon them by a body of, no doubt, influential and powerful individuals in opposition both to the expressed opinions of the House of Commons and to the general merits of the question. It would not at that moment be desirable to enter again into these merits. He had given Notice of his intention to move a general reduction of the Votes; and unless the Secretary to the Treasury, or some other Gentleman on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, could give a clear explanation of what had taken place, he would consider it his duty to vote against this charge. He begged to move the rejection of this Vote.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £1,921, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1880, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Charity Commission for England and Wales."—(*Mr. James.*)

Mr. DILLWYN hoped that the Committee would be furnished with some explanation of this Vote. He did not see that any reason had been shown for the increase of this charge, nor for the increase which appeared upon almost every item in the Estimate. The original Estimate for two Commissions was £1,800, and now an additional sum of £600 was required.

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON said, that the explanation was as easy as he hoped it would be satisfactory to the Committee. Only three-fourths of the amount on account of the Endowed Schools had been taken in last year's

Estimates. Early in last Session a Bill was passed to provide for the Endowed Schools—the Act relating to which had expired in the middle of last year—continuing for three years longer, and it then became necessary to take an additional quarter's expenses which had been left out of the former Estimate. If his hon. Friend the Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn) would look into the matter, he would see that this was the proportion which had been taken for the various salaries, and entirely accounted for the amount now asked for, which represented one-fourth of the expense of the Commission for the whole year. That was the reason for the apparent increase, and he ventured to think his hon. Friend would see that the reduction which it was proposed to move would apply to this particular branch, and not to the general Commission. He trusted that his hon. Friend would not press the matter to a division. At the same time, he could not but say that no one regretted more than he that another Secretary to the Treasury should have made an endeavour, and again have failed to carry out what he individually believed ought to be done. He had on more than one occasion expressed his opinion that this Commission should be self-supporting, and he had last year stated that he would endeavour to propose something as a solution of the question. The Bill introduced, however, had passed through only a certain portion of its career in that House, when it was met by an opposition which made it impossible to proceed, and the measure was in consequence withdrawn. This was a question which he begged to assure the hon. Member for Gateshead (Mr. W. H. James) he had very much at heart; but he feared it was most unlikely that any effort on the part of the Government would be sufficient to overcome the opposition which had been brought to bear on the measure last year. The object of the Bill, however, was one which he would have liked to see carried out quite as much as his hon. Friend opposite.

MR. RYLANDS hoped that after the explanation of the Secretary to the Treasury the Motion would not be pressed. He felt he could not vote with the hon. Member under the present circumstances of the case, however much he and his hon. Friends might be desirous of supporting the general view which had been expressed. It would be desirable, therefore, in his opinion, that the Vote should be passed. At the same time, while giving his assistance to the Government in passing this Vote, he desired to ask how far the Treasury intended to proceed with the Estimates then before the Committee. It was then 20 minutes past 1 o'clock; and although he had no desire that Progress should be reported too soon, they had arrived at a time when it was proper that the point should be considered. If his hon. Friend would allow the Vote then under consideration to pass, perhaps the Government would state what was their intention in that respect.

MR. W. H. JAMES desired to point out that the Secretary to the Treasury had not answered his question. The Government had last year refused a Committee of Inquiry because they intended to deal with the subject themselves; but his own idea was that one reason why they were not anxious to proceed in this matter was that the funds of these Charities were often found to be of use on the eve of a General Election.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Monk.*)

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON hoped that the Committee would proceed. He would like to get through those Votes which did not contain any contentious matter. There were a great many Votes in the Supplementary Estimates to be got through; and although a certain amount of progress had been made a few Votes only had been passed. He hoped the Committee would proceed until they came to a Vote that would raise discussion, when he would at once consent to report Progress.

MR. O'DONNELL thought that if the Government insisted upon proceeding any further they would spoil the admirable temper which had been shown by the Committee up to that time. So far as discussion was concerned, a very interesting discussion could and ought to be raised upon the Vote for Stationery and

Printing. It was certainly time to report Progress, and he trusted the Government would agree to the Motion out of regard to the good disposition which had been shown by the Committee during the evening.

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON said, that after what had fallen from the hon. Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell) with respect to the Stationery and Printing Vote, he would agree that Progress should be reported as soon as that Vote was reached.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

(14.) £1,085, Civil Service Commission.

Mr. DILLWYN desired to know what had been the increase of business which had raised the charge under this head? He would have supposed it was very well known what the amount of business was likely to be when the original Estimate was framed.

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON said, that the increase under this head had been caused by the examination of Military and Civil Service candidates whose numbers had increased; and he pointed out to the Committee that whereas the fees for the year had been estimated at £7,480 the actual payments had amounted to £12,500. The Committee would see from these figures what an increased amount of work had fallen upon the Examiners, and necessitated the increase of the charge under consideration.

Vote *agreed to.*

(15.) £16,763, Local Government Board.

Mr. RAMSAY thought the Committee should be informed as to whether there was any intention to augment the grant for medical officers in the Northern part of the Kingdom. This subject had been discussed last year, and there was an indication given then that something might be done for increasing the allowance in respect of medical officers in Scotland. Up to that time, however, nothing had been done. He would like, before they came to discuss the question in the Estimates for the coming year, to have some information as to this sum. In Scotland they had nothing corresponding to it, and he would like to know if anything was to be granted to Scotland before the Poor Law Act was passed? If the Poor Law Act was not required, and if the people of Scotland were to get any grant at all, they ought, in his opinion, to get it soon. It had also been suggested that there should be an allowance made for the education of pauper children, and they had a large sum voted annually for providing teachers in the Poor Law schools. He did not approve of these schools at all; but he would not then enter into that question. He thought, however, that when such large sums as that now asked for were voted for schools in England no reason existed why Her Majesty's Government should not give the two countries, England and Scotland, an amount corresponding to their respective populations, because they could secure an equitable distribution of the grant in Scotland and carry out any rules the Treasury might lay down. He suggested that no legislation with regard to the Poor Law should be proceeded with during the present Session.

General Sir GEORGE BALFOUR observed, that all the efforts of the Scotch Members to induce the Government to make this grant for medical officers had hitherto been unsuccessful, for they did not band themselves together as the Irish Members did. He hoped that either the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary or the hon. Baronet the Secretary to the Treasury would give the Committee some information as to the intentions of the Government. A bad Poor Law was proposed to be introduced into Scotland, and then the Scotch Members were told that they could not have the money they required for medical officers unless they had legislation which they did not want.

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON could quite understand that many people preferred to have money from the Treasury without any conditions. It was stated last year, on behalf of the Government, that unless the Bill proposed by the Government was passed the money would not be granted. The measure introduced did not meet with the favourable consideration of Scotch Members, and in the result it was withdrawn. When the Bill was passed the Treasury would be prepared to place Scotland financially in the same position as regarded the grant as the Sister Country.

MR. RAMSAY said, that they had no desire to avoid the conditions with regard to the grant which were required. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had explained to them that if they desired the grant they must conform to the conditions under which the money was paid in England. But they did conform to those conditions already. Would the right hon. Gentleman explain what the conditions were to which they had not conformed? It was true they did not conform to the conditions affecting other matters. He thought they were quite right in asking for the additional grant for Scotland without being compelled to accept the Bill. The Bill was not required for the purpose of giving them the grant. There was no article upon the Statute Book which authorized this particular grant as regarded medical officers in England. The Government refused to give them the grant unless they accepted conditions affecting the administration of the Poor Law in Scotland which they objected to. He was afraid his hon. and gallant Friend was quite right it saying that unless they banded themselves together in the way their Irish Friends did their claims would meet with no consideration. He was sorry, because the system of banding themselves together had been brought into disrespute—so much so, that he did not think it would be wise to follow the successful example set them at the present time. Scotchmen usually did act together quite as harmoniously as Irishmen, and he did not think they needed any further organization. He hoped that the hon. Baronet would bring their rights to the notice of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and would explain that the legislation proposed was not required, and that they were willing to accept the grant on the same conditions on which it was agreed to.

Vote *agreed to.*

(16.) £600, National Debt Office.

House *resumed.*

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow;*

Committee to sit again upon *Wednesday.*

ANCIENT MONUMENTS BILL.—[BILL 51.]

(*Sir John Lubbock, Mr, Beresford Hope, Mr. Morgan, Sir Richard Wallace.*)

CONSIDERATION, AS AMENDED.

Bill, as amended, *considered.*

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON moved, in Clause 2, page 1, line 24, to leave out—

> "Council of the Society of Antiquaries of London for England; the Council of the Royal Irish Academy for Ireland; and the Council of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland for Scotland;"

and to insert instead thereof, "Trustees of the British Museum." He said that when the Bill was in Committee he should reserve to himself the liberty, if he thought right, of re-introducing into the Bill on Report the agreement which had been made by the Government with the promoters of the Bill with regard to the authorities to be intrusted with carrying the measure into effect. The authorities of the British Museum had been asked to and had accepted the trust, and the Bill was allowed to proceed on the understanding that they were to be the authority named in it. In Committee a change was made, and the Trustees were deprived of the duty intrusted to them, and the three Bodies mentioned in the Amendment were inserted in their place. The Amendment which he now moved was for the purpose of re-instating the Trustees of the British Museum in the position it which they originally stood in the Bill. If anyone were to look at the list of the Trustees of the British Museum they would see that it contained names which would insure proper execution of the object of the measure, and be a sufficient guarantee that the claims of Scotland and Ireland would be duly regarded.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 1, line 24, leave out "Council of the Society of Antiquaries of London for England, the Council of the Royal Irish Academy for Ireland, and the Council of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland for Scotland," and insert "Trustees of the British Museum."—(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Clause amended accordingly, and *agreed to.*

Bill to be read the third time *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

CENSUS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Sclater-Booth, Bill for taking the Census of England, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Sclater-Booth, Mr. Secretary Cross, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Salt.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 85.]

CENSUS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of The Lord Advocate, Bill for taking the Census of Scotland, *ordered* to be brought in by The Lord Advocate and Mr. Secretary Cross.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 86.]

LOANS FOR LOCAL WORKS.

Select Committee *appointed*, "to inquire into the system under which Loans for Local Works are now advanced out of the Consolidated Fund, or on the security of the Consolidated Fund; and to Report:—

1. Whether the system hitherto in force has been conducted without loss to the Exchequer, pointing out, if there has been loss, the causes which have led to it:

2. Whether it is clear that the present system, if continued, will be carried on without loss to the Exchequer or injury to the public credit:

3. Whether further facilities might not with advantage be given to local authorities so as to enable them to borrow, upon their own local security, without having recourse to the Exchequer; and whether any, and if so, what amendments are required in 'The Local Loans Act, 1875.'"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

And, on March 5, Committee *nominated* as follows:—Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Childers, Mr. Sclater-Booth, Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Pease, Mr. Ridley, Sir Edward Colebrooke, Mr. Dalrymple, Mr. Chamberlain, Sir Graham Montgomery, Mr. Gray, Mr. Paget, Mr. Rylands, Mr. Hanbury, Mr. Synan, and Mr. Spencer Stanhope:—Power to send for persons, papers, and records; Five to be the quorum.

House adjourned at a quarter before Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 24th February, 1880.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*First Reading*—Relief of Distress (Ireland) * (19).

Second Reading—Companies Acts Amendment [9].

Report—Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement (Scotland) Act (1875) Amendment* (8); Seeds (Ireland) * (18).

COMPANIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

(*The Lord Aberdare.*)

(NO. 9.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

Lord ABERDARE, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that it was substantially the same as that to which their Lordships gave a second reading last year, and its purpose was to enable Companies, by a less cumbrous process than at present, to apply accumulated profits to the reduction of the share capital, instead of distributing the same in the form of a bonus. With respect to the shareholders, no resolution dealing with the profits in this manner could be arrived at unless it was passed by three-fourths of the shareholders; while with respect to the creditors of a Company, their security would remain as good as before, as it was provided that the capital, when reduced, should not be extinguished, but remain in abeyance, and be available if required. It was also proposed to enable trustees of persons holding shares, in order to save them the necessity of making other investments, to leave their shares untouched, that portion which was in excess of the reduced capital receiving interest at the rate of not less than 3 and not more than 4 per cent.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Aberdare.*)

Lord DENMAN said, that in 1856, when the Limited Liability Acts were discussed, Lord Overstone had said that in all cases capital should be fully paid up. Now, this Bill appeared to him (Lord Denman) to be in reduction of paid up capital. He might be wrong; but, if so, some noble Lord would be kind enough to set him right.

The Earl of REDESDALE took exception to the clauses of the Bill relating to trustees and others who declined to accept the bonus. No provision was made as to the manner in which the money left untouched was to be dealt with. It was necessary both for those shareholders and for the Company that it should be safely invested, and the interest received from such investments, neither more nor less paid to those shareholders, that money having no concern in the increasing or diminishing profits of the Company, those shareholders holding their shares as paid up only to the same amount as those who accepted the bonus.

LORD SELBORNE believed that the limitation of interest was inserted in the present Bill in consequence of a suggestion he had made last year; but, on further consideration, he thought it would be unwise to fix a maximum limit to the interest to be so paid. He should recommend that it should be struck out.

LORD ABERDARE said, he would consider the point suggested by the two noble Lords before the Bill went into Committee.

Motion *agreed to:* Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Thursday* the 11*th of March* next.

EXECUTION IN CHEETHAM PRISON.

ADDRESS FOR A PAPER.

LORD HOUGHTON moved for a Copy of the presentment of the jury empanelled to sit on the body of William Cassidy, executed in Cheetham Prison, with respect to the admission of reporters to the prison. The noble Lord said, that it had been his intention to make some remarks as to the non-admission of reporters to witness the execution, because he thought it was injurious to the public interests; but he had been made aware that the Secretary of State for the Home Department felt some difficulty on the subject, and would try to effect some arrangement of the difficulty; and that being so, he would postpone any discussion of the question till that day week.

Motion *agreed to.*

Address for—

Copy of the presentment of the jury empanelled to sit on the body of William Cassidy, executed in Cheetham Prison, with respect to the admission of reporters to the prison.—(*The Lord Houghton.*)

House adjourned at half past Five o'clock, to Thursday next, half past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 24th February, 1880.

MINUTES.] — SELECT COMMITTEE—Co-operative Stores, *re-appointed* and *nominated;* Merchant Ships Laden in Bulk, *appointed.*

SUPPLY — *considered in Committee — Resolutions* [February 23] *reported.*

PRIVATE BILL (*by Order*) — *Second Reading — Referred to Select Committee*—Liverpool Corporation Water.

PUBLIC BILLS—*Second Reading*—Strensall Common [60].

Third Reading—Artizans' Dwellings Act (1868) Amendment Act (1879) Amendment* [63]; Ancient Monuments [51], and *passed.*

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

LIVERPOOL CORPORATION WATER BILL.—(*by Order.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. ROWLEY HILL rose to move that it be read a second time on that day six months. He said that, in making that Motion, he did not propose to enter into questions of the individual injury which would be inflicted by the provisions of the Bill upon those who resided in the Severn Valley, inasmuch as it would be alleged that those were matters which were better fitted for an inquiry of a Committee of the House, and ought not to be discussed upon the second reading of a Private Bill. He proposed now simply to call attention to the principle of the Bill which empowered the Corporation of Liverpool to supply itself with water not from sources perfectly open to them and almost inexhaustible in their own county, but from outside their own county, by enabling them to go into a watershed which was not within their own geographical limits, and to abstract a supply of water which, from time immemorial had been devoted to the use of the district through which the river flowed. There could be no question that the taking away of the head waters of the Vyrnwy would be a great injury to the Severn Valley. Those waters were the only pure and uncontaminated waters flowing into the Severn;

the rest of the waters of the district were contaminated more or less in consequence of the geological strata through which they flowed. On principle he contended that they ought not to allow one district, however large and important, to go to another watershed and take away the water which had been provided by nature for that district, without showing some stronger reason than had been alleged on behalf of the Liverpool Corporation. The Corporation did not propose to take away merely a certain quantity of the water; but they proposed to take away the whole of it, with the exception of a small quantity—some 8,000,000 gallons a-day—which they proposed to guarantee to the Severn Valley. Nor was it proposed to enforce this guarantee in a way that would insure its performance, for nothing was said about penalties, on the supply of an inadequate quantity. The Bill simply said that this quantity should be provided, the Corporation having the power to take the whole of the rest of the water of the district for the benefit of Liverpool, and not merely for its sanitary benefit, but for its commercial advantages as well. The quantity the people of Liverpool would require for sanitary purposes, in addition to what they had now, was very small indeed; but they had large factories which required to be supplied. He was told that one sugar factory alone paid £4,000 a-year to the Corporation of Liverpool, and the present Bill proposed to take away the water of the Severn from the sanitary purposes it was naturally designed for, and for which it had hitherto been used, in order to enable the Corporation of Liverpool to obtain a large revenue from the sale of the water for manufacturing purposes. By taking the average flow of the head waters of the Vyrnwy, and retailing it to the Liverpool manufacturers, the Corporation of Liverpool would be enabled to secure a very large revenue. But this proceeding would bear very hardly upon the sanitary authorities in the Valley of the Severn, and would prove most disastrous to the interests of the population of the small towns on the banks of the Severn. He therefore wished to urge upon the House that there was no reason why the water of one district should be appropriated for the use of another, and why the authorities of the small towns near the Valley of the Severn should be left to fight a battle for the possession of their own natural property against a large and powerful Corporation like that of Liverpool. The Commission of Inquiry which sat about 10 years ago, and over which the Duke of Richmond presided, considered the question in reference to the water supply of the Metropolis, and they reported against a plan which was precisely identical to this, on the ground that, in their opinion, Parliament ought to maintain—

> "That no town or district should be allowed to appropriate a source of supply which naturally and geographically belongs to a town or district nearer to such source."

He begged to move that the Bill be read a second time on that day six months.

Mr. MONK seconded the Amendment. He wished to express surprise that no one was present on the part of the Corporation of Liverpool when the Bill was called on to move the second reading, and the consequence was that the Motion was made without one word of explanation. This was no ordinary case. On the contrary, it was one of great importance, and one which very nearly touched the supply of water not only to Liverpool but to the great towns and cities in this country. This was an application on the part of the Corporation of Liverpool to take away the water of the River Vyrnwy and the other rivers which ran into the Severn. By so doing, Liverpool went out of its own district and into the watershed of the Severn, with which it had no right and no geographical connection. As the House was aware, this was contrary to all the principles of the legislation which had guided that House in similar cases. When a very strong case had been made out it had been the practice to allow a town to go into another district, with which it had otherwise no right to interfere, for the supply of water. But in the case of Liverpool there was no such necessity. Last year the great Thirlmere Water Scheme was passed by Parliament, and in that Act power was reserved to the Corporations of Liverpool and of other large towns to avail themselves of that scheme for the supply of pure water. By availing itself of the Thirlmere Scheme, not only would Liverpool be saved a very considerable expense, but it would have a much readier supply, and one which could be made available much sooner than by going to the Severn watershed. The water-pipes in connection with the Thirlmere Scheme would be laid within three miles of the Liverpool district, and the expense of obtaining an efficient supply from the Thirlmere reservoirs would be very much less than by the scheme which was now before the House. It might be said that for some time Manchester would not be able to supply the quantity of water Liverpool might require, and that great delay must take place; but there was no doubt that eventually an efficient supply would be afforded. It might be necessary, perhaps, to construct and deepen the large reservoirs; but that was a mere question of expense. The truth of the matter was, this was part of a very great question; and the President of the Local Government Board yesterday, in reply to a question addressed to him, said that the Government were possessed of sufficient evidence and sufficient information with regard to the water supply throughout the country to render it unnecessary for any further evidence to be taken. The hon. Member for Worcester (Mr. Rowley Hill) showed with great force that the Corporation of Liverpool, in entering a district with which they had no connection, and availing themselves of the waters of the watershed with which they were not geographically connected, were putting the Corporations of the towns in the Severn Valley at considerable expense in opposing their scheme. At present, the towns of Shrewsbury, Tewkesbury, Bridgnorth, and Worcester obtained their supply from the Severn; and other towns, such as Bewdley, Stourport, and Upton-on-Severn, would be seriously affected by the abstraction of the waters of the Vyrnwy. Under these circumstances, he asked the House, in all seriousness, not to permit the Bill to be read a second time, unless Liverpool made out a very strong case, which, at the present moment, she had not made out, as she had made out no case whatever. So far, the House had not heard one word in support of the Bill. There was another point to which he wished to call attention. The district in which the Vyrnwy rose was part of the Severn watershed, to which the salmon went up for the purpose of breeding; and by this scheme the breeding of salmon would be almost entirely destroyed, because the salmon would no longer be able from want of water to go up the fish passes at the weirs, where at present they found their access to the breeding grounds. That would entirely cut off the supply of salmon to the Severn, and was a very serious matter indeed, and one that he hoped the House would take into its serious consideration. The compensation of 8,000,000 gallons was wholly insufficient. He might add further, that it was a great hardship for the towns in the Severn district to be required to appear before a Committee of that House and incur the heavy expense which was involved in opposing a Bill of this nature, especially when it was known that the town of Liverpool could obtain as good and as large a supply as it could require from the Thirlmere reservoirs. There could be no doubt that this was not only a Bill for the supply of water, but a Bill for the establishment of a commercial undertaking on the part of the Corporation of Liverpool, who proposed to repay themselves the cost of the scheme by selling the water taken out of the Severn district to the public of Lancashire. Under these circumstances, he had much pleasure in seconding the Amendment.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Rowley Hill.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. HIBBERT was sorry that his hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool (Mr. Rathbone) was not in his place, as he would, no doubt, be able to state why the Bill should be read a second time better than he (Mr. Hibbert) could. He certainly thought that if the Amendment which had been proposed were passed it would be dealing in a very hard manner with the proposal now before the House. Of course, he did not know very clearly all the arguments that might be used in favour of the proposal of the Liverpool Corporation; but he did know that there were very many reasons why Liverpool should obtain a better supply of water. They were told by his hon. Friend who seconded the Amendment that they might obtain a supply from Thirlmere. But he remembered in the Report of the Committee on the Thirlmere scheme that the promoters of the scheme did not hold out any probability that any large supply would be given to any other towns than those in the immediate neighbourhood of Manchester. Then, again, the Thirlmere Scheme was not likely to be completed at all within 10 years. If that was really the case, and the water from Thirlmere would not only be required by Manchester and the towns in the neighbourhood of Manchester, but that the scheme could not be completed for 10 years, Liverpool was compelled to go elsewhere for a supply. He was informed that about nine-tenths of the existing supply was already required for the use of the present inhabitants; and as they knew the great increase that was going on there it was evident that in a very short time the whole of the present supply would be required. What, then, was Liverpool to do? If they went out of their own district anywhere else, they would be met by the same objections as were urged against them in this case. They could not take the water from the red sandstone, because it was found to be impregnated with sewage and unfit for consumption; and, therefore, it was entirely out of the question that they could have recourse to that means of obtaining a supply. The only doubt he entertained in regard to the present proposal was whether, as it was intended to go so far from Liverpool, the water abstracted might not interfere with the supply of towns nearer to the source from which the supply was taken. That question, however, could be satisfactorily inquired into by a Committee such as that which was suggested by the President of the Local Government Board. That, he thought, might be a fair subject for the consideration of the House; but he could not believe that the House would consent to throw out a Bill of this importance on the second reading without giving the promoters a chance of being heard before a Committee; and whether that Committee was to be an ordinary Committee or a Hybrid Committee was a matter for the House to consider. His own opinion was that so many questions of importance might arise in regard to the proposal that probably the Committee suggested by the President of the Local Government Board was the one which would deal with the question in the manner most satisfactory to the House. He should, therefore, give his vote in favour of the Bill being read a second time, and he trusted that that would be the general feeling of the House.

Mr. J. R. YORKE regretted that the hon. Member for Liverpool opposite (Mr. Rathbone) was not in his place to represent the case of Liverpool. At the same time, he was sure that the hon. Member's absence was a matter of accident, and the House had already been placed pretty fully in possession of all the facts of the case. He did not desire to say anything on behalf of Liverpool. He was told that that town was in great want of water, and that the works necessary for increasing its supply required to be constructed immediately, as the needs of the place were of a pressing character. It was, therefore, necessary that the House should disregard the usual rules that guided legislation on this subject, and which laid down the principle that people were not to trespass beyond their own watersheds for the purpose of obtaining water. He had risen more particularly to answer some of the remarks which had been made by the hon. Gentleman opposite who moved the rejection of the Bill (Mr. Rowley Hill), inasmuch as the hon. Member appeared to imply that there was a great and widespread opposition in the Severn district to the proposals contained in this Bill. He held in his hand a Petition which he had received that morning from his own constituents, 105 of the largest owners and occupiers of the district between Tewkesbury and Gloucester, representing almost the whole of the riparian tenantry of the district, who were anxious that this Bill should pass into law. The Petitioners said they believed that their property would be much benefited if Parliament sanctioned the works proposed to be carried out by the Bill, inasmuch as they would tend to regulate the flow of water down the River Severn and diminish the floods by which much damage was done to their property. This showed that, so far from being afraid of the effect of taking away a certain portion of the water of the Severn, the riparian owners and occupiers welcomed the proposal as being one that was likely to result in diminishing the flow of water in the summer, and any bad effect which might arise from the river in the winter. During the last 10 years various works had been constructed by the Severn Commissioners at the expense of the riparian owners and occupiers, for the purpose of regulating the flow of water, and Mr. Fowler, the engineer, had prepared a scheme upon the subject some time ago. It would be impossible to find a higher authority upon the matter than Mr. Fowler, who was thoroughly acquainted with all questions of this kind. He had seen the Report of Mr. Fowler, and that Report declared that the propositions contained in this Bill, if carried out, would tend rather to benefit than to injure the district. He did not wish to detain the House any longer; but he thought it right to mention that he had received this communication from a large number of his constituents, and he would leave to Liverpool itself the task of satisfying the House as to the necessity for supplying this water. He trusted the House would bear in mind that there was anything but a unanimous feeling in the counties of Gloucester and Worcester as to any danger that was likely to result from the adoption of this scheme.

An hon. MEMBER said, he trusted that the House would not consent to read the Bill a second time. The River Severn, from its mouth upwards for about 40 miles, contained a large number of locks for facilitating the navigation of the river; and the navigation itself would, in his opinion, be very seriously impaired if the large quantity of water proposed by this Liverpool Bill was abstracted from the river—something like 4,000,000 gallons a-day. He had himself seen in the summer time the locks and weirs of the Severn almost bare, with scarcely any water going over them at all, and when the locks were opened the river itself was drawn beyond the level of the locks. He mentioned that to show how seriously the proposals of this Bill might interfere with the navigation of the river. Already something like £300,000 had been expended in improving the navigation of the Severn. There was a compensation clause in the Liverpool Bill by which something like 8,000,000 gallons a-day were to be supplied; and if these 8,000,000 gallons were to be turned from the river the navigation must be considerably impaired. He had himself seen people walking dry-shod over the weirs in the summer time. He failed to see why Liverpool should leave its own districts and come to the best gathering ground now left unoccupied and propose to take possession of it, not for domestic and sanitary purposes, but for the commercial requirements of Liverpool, in order to realize a profit. That that was the case was shown by the fact that the Corporation of Liverpool looked forward to so large a profit that the rates of the town of Liverpool were in the future to be considerably reduced, by the profits anticipated from this scheme, if it were carried out. He trusted that the House would reject the Bill, for, keeping in view the prospect of future legislation on the subject and the necessity of supplying large towns with an adequate supply of pure water, he was satisfied that this district could not afford to dispense with the large quantity of water which Liverpool proposed to abstract. He thought Liverpool ought to be contented if it could be shown that the Corporation were able to obtain a supply of water from their own watershed. When the Thirlmere scheme was before a Committee it was stated that this scheme would be able to supply Liverpool with as much water as the town could require. But, however that might be, there were still other sources available for Liverpool; for instance, there was Ulleswater, which was perfectly open to supply Liverpool with water; and it was undoubtedly a fact that in the watershed of Liverpool there were plenty of sources of supply for Liverpool, and for the whole of South Lancashire, without any necessity for taking the water supply of the Severn Valley. He thought it was a great hardship that the inhabitants of the Severn Valley should now be called upon, at great expense, to defend themselves against this attack on the part of Liverpool, and he trusted that the House would not consent to read the Bill a second time.

SIR BALDWYN LEIGHTON said, that, having a Motion on this subject, he might, perhaps, be allowed to make a few observations. Although representing a constituency in the Severn Valley, he did not desire to speak as a partizan or an advocate. He was not sure that interests were always best represented by advocates; but he desired to appeal to the impartial judgment of the House, and specially to those hon. Members who had given attention to these subjects.

This was a proposal by Liverpool to come 70 miles into another watershed to subtract water for its supply; and, perhaps, it might serve to show the magnitude of the undertaking if he observed that the proposal was to make an artificial lake of 1,000 acres, submerging a village and a church. But it was not the magnitude of the engineering undertaking, so much as the importance of the principle of the question, that he desired to call attention to. There were in England—excluding the Highlands and Dartmoor—only two great gathering grounds for water supply on a large scale; one was the Cumberland Lakes, the other North Wales. A year or two ago the former was taken by Manchester, and now it was proposed to take the latter for Liverpool, which was practically the same district. He was quite ready to admit the urgent necessity of water supply to our great towns. He also believed that these undertakings, enabling the great populous places to be water-carriers to a district, might, under proper restrictions, go far to solve the question of water supply. He went further—for he desired to be frank with the House. He thought such undertakings might serve to diminish floods; but vested interests must be regarded; they could not sacrifice the water supply, navigation, fisheries, and sanitary requirements of a whole district even to supply another great population. The proper principle, he apprehended, was this—that no town should appropriate the water supply belonging to another district, unless special circumstances could be shown to justify it. The people themselves of the district must be first served, and for this obvious reason—that then the water was returned to the stream; and whereas they might be affected by reducing the flow of water, they were compensated by the supply—and that was the principle laid down by the Duke of Richmond's Commission in 1869. But Liverpool said, "We have no alternative." Was that so? He was informed that the Rivington mains only required proper cleaning to supply 4,000,000 gallons a-day now. Then he held in his hand Reports by eminent engineers to the Liverpool Corporation as to supply from the Cumberland Lakes, the Lakes of Ulleswater, and Haweswater; also the Rivers Wyre and Bleasdale; also the Bala Lake, in North Wales. As to the last, he might observe that, though in North Wales, it had a watershed down the Dee Valley towards Liverpool, and would not, therefore, be open to the objection of a separate watershed. So that it was not true that there was no alternative, though the circumstances of each case might have to be considered by a Committee with the objections thereto. Then, as to precedent and principle laid down by this House, they had the Report of the Duke of Richmond's Committee and the Rivers Pollution Commission; also the Rivers Conservancy Bill of last Session. He found that in 1865 a Water Bill of Gloucester and Cheltenham, to obtain a supply from the Thames Valley, was thrown out on the second reading by a majority of 30, on the same ground—namely, that the watershed belonged to the Valley. Then they had the case of Thirlmere, a year or two ago, which was referred to a Hybrid Committee. He would only observe that the cases were not quite similar, because in the case of Thirlmere there was no population affected by the withdrawal of the water, and it was practically a case within the watershed of the town of Manchester. There were also æsthetic questions which did not occur in the case of the Severn Valley. He trusted, therefore, he had said enough to show that if the House was disposed to read the Bill a second time it could only be on the understanding that it was referred to a Hybrid Committee, with an Instruction such as he had given Notice of. As he saw that his right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board had put on the Paper that morning a Notice substantially the same as his, and that, in fact, his right hon. Friend had adopted his proposal, he would venture to ask his hon. Friend the Member for Worcester to withdraw his Amendment, on the understanding that the Bill was so referred to a Hybrid Committee, with such an Instruction as he had given Notice of, and his right hon. Friend had adopted.

Mr. SCLATER-BOOTH said, he did not intend to occupy the time of the House by discussing the merits of the Bill upon the second reading. Undoubtedly it was a Bill of a peculiar character, and he could not wonder that its provisions had attracted the notice of persons who were interested in the waters of the Valley of the Severn. His hon.

Friend the Member for Worcester had proposed to reject the Bill upon the second reading; but neither his hon. Friend nor the hon. Member for Gloucester, who seconded the Motion, nor the deputation which waited upon him (Mr. Sclater-Booth) a few days ago, representing the population of the Severn Valley, stated their views in such a manner as to justify an assertion that the Bill was altogether opposed to their interests and wishes. He had no intention of becoming an advocate of the Bill; but he thought he might venture to say that he was aware that Liverpool stood in need of an improved and extended water supply, and he had believed that good reasons could be shown for the selection which had been made in the plan now submitted to the House. But whether that were so or not, whether it proved to be a good one or one that the House would afterwards decline to sanction, undoubtedly the Corporation of Liverpool, representing such vast interests and such an enormous extent of population, had a right to expect that a well matured scheme, such as the House might expect this to be, would receive full consideration at the hands of the House of Commons. On the other hand, he was free to admit that, following the analogy of the Thirlmere Scheme of last year and the year before last, which was thought of such peculiar importance that it was referred to a tribunal of a different constitution from that to which Private Bills were usually referred, the same course should be pursued in this case. No doubt the two cases were not exactly similar; but there was some analogy between them. If this course were adopted, the Bill would be referred to a tribunal that would be capable of taking a wider view of the matter than an ordinary Private Bill Committee; and it certainly appeared to him that the interests of those who dwelt in the Severn Valley should be secured and maintained, seeing that they had a sort of *primâ facie* right, not, perhaps, to the monopoly of this water, but to have their interests fairly secured and considered before the water was taken away from them. He had, therefore, taken upon himself to place a Notice upon the Paper of a Motion that if the Bill were read a second time it should be referred to a Select Committee of nine Members, five to be nominated by the House, and four by the Committee of Selection, and that such of the Petitioners as should have presented Petitions against the Bill might, if they thought fit, be heard by Counsel before the Committee. His hon. Friend below the Gangway (Mr. J. R. Yorke) very fairly stated that the Bill was not opposed by many of the constituents whom he represented, but whose interests were connected with the Valley of the Severn. Whether that was so or not was a question which might be fully inquired into, if the Bill were referred to a Hybrid Committee, with the Instruction which he proposed to add for the guidance of the Committee, and the language of which he hoped the House and the hon. Member behind him (Sir Baldwyn Leighton) would approve, rather than that of the Motion of which his hon. Friend had previously given Notice. If that were so, he hoped his hon. Friends (Mr. Hill and Sir Baldwyn Leighton), who had taken upon themselves the serious responsibility of asking the House to reject the Bill on the second reading would be content that it should be referred to a Committee charged with the consideration of the interests of everybody concerned in the water of the district. He undoubtedly thought that it would be for the promoters of the Bill to show that they were not taking away more water than was absolutely required for the necessities of Liverpool, and that instead of seeking to abstract it in order to make a profit out of it, they had in reality no other available source of supply. He believed that good reason should be shown why the Thirlmere Scheme could not be made available. He would not detain the House further, as it was necessary to proceed with the Public Business. The Resolution which he intended to propose, after the Bill was read a second time, in the event of the Amendment now before the House being withdrawn, was—

"That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee of nine Members, five to be nominated by the House and four by the Committee of Selection, and that such of the Petitioners as shall have presented their Petitions against the Bill may, if they think fit, be heard before such Committee by their Counsel. That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power to inquire into and report upon the present and prospective sufficiency of the water supply of the district which the Corporation of Liverpool are authorized to supply, and into the existence of any other available source of supply; and whether, having regard to the various interests affected by the scheme, and to the present and prospective requirements of the population in the Severn Valley as to water-supply, fishing, navigation, and the scouring effect of floods, compulsory powers should be given to take water from the River Vyrnwy and its tributaries; and, if so, to what extent, and under what conditions, as to compensation water, or otherwise; and also what provisions are requisite for enforcing and securing such conditions."

Sir EDMUND LECHMERE was anxious to make a few remarks on the part of those who opposed the Bill. He thought it might mislead the House if it were supposed that in any churlish spirit they were endeavouring to deprive a large and important population like that of Liverpool of the means of obtaining water for domestic and sanitary purposes. The fact of the matter was that the inhabitants of the Severn Valley who were interested in the gathering grounds of the Vyrnwy River-head believed that an efficient water supply could be obtained by Liverpool at Ulleswater, or if sanitary purposes were the object of the promoters of the Bill they might avail themselves of the powers given to Manchester, under the Thirlmere Water Scheme, of obtaining from that source 25 gallons per head per day, which were sufficient for all sanitary purposes. It was because the proposal was to take away this water for trade purposes that the inhabitants of the district objected to it. It was important, no doubt, for a manufacturing and commercial town like Liverpool to have an abundant supply of water for manufacturing purposes; but the promoters of the Bill were contemplating the abstraction of an amount of water that must necessarily interfere with the navigation of one of the most important rivers in the Kingdom. At the present moment the River Severn was navigable for 42 miles; the daily traffic upon it amounting to thousands of tons, and it brought in a revenue of £8,000 a-year. This navigable river was really a great artery of the trade and commerce of the Midland counties; and it, therefore, did seem a monstrous thing that for the purpose of supplying Liverpool with a large amount of water for manufacturing purposes, and enabling the Corporation of Liverpool to sell it at a large profit, the Commissioners of the Severn, who were the guardians of that river, were to have their water supply so much diminished that the navigation of the river would be injured and obstructed. It might be said that it was a question how far compensation could be afforded for the water that was taken away from the navigation of the Severn. But then, again, there was the sanitary question, which required full consideration, and was of the utmost importance to such towns as Bridgnorth, Shrewsbury, and Worcester, which derived their water supply from the Severn. He had thought it only right that he should endeavour to point out these considerations to the House, and he might add that he had not the slightest idea of opposing the Bill in order to deprive the town of Liverpool of a supply of water.

Mr. LYON PLAYFAIR said, he knew nothing yet of the merits of the proposal to supply Liverpool with water from this particular source, or of the grounds of opposition to it; but he thought the House would do well to adopt the course which the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board had proposed. If the House appointed a Hybrid Committee, having no local interest on either side, or as little local interest on either side as possible, they would secure that the subject would be examined strictly on its merits. Undoubtedly, a large town like Liverpool had great need of water, and every well-considered scheme that could be submitted for providing a supply must receive every attention. On the other hand, when a town left its own watershed, a great deal of proof was necessary to convince the House that such town was justified in separating from its own natural watershed, and going into another part of the country for a supply. He thought the present case was very similar to the case of the Thirlmere Water Bill, and if it were referred to a Hybrid Committee he believed that full justice would be done to it. There was, however, one suggestion which he should like to make. The hon. Gentleman who sat on the other side of the House (Mr. Raikes) had often done him the honour of making him Chairman of such Committees as this; but as he had served so recently on the one which sat to inquire into the Thirlmere Scheme he trusted that he would not be asked to act again. On general grounds, he thought it was of great importance that an inquiry should take place into the proposals made to the House, and he therefore hoped the House would not reject the Bill.

MR. RAIKES said, that the only part of the speech just delivered by the right hon. Member for Edinburgh with which the House would not agree was that in which he expressed his unwillingness to sit upon the Committee. The House was aware of the good services which the right hon. Gentleman had already rendered as Chairman of the Manchester and Thirlmere Committee; and he (Mr. Raikes) hoped that if a similar Committee were constituted in regard to the present Bill they might at least profit by the information acquired by the right hon. Gentleman. It was most desirable, when Committees of this sort were constituted, that they should possess such weight with the House as to satisfy it that they had fairly considered the best interests of all the parties concerned. But there was one point in regard to the proceedings in connection with the Thirlmere Bill to which he wished to call the attention of the House. He wished to remind hon. Members that when that Bill was first before Parliament the promoters of it were put to great inconvenience on account of the action taken in "another place," where it was held that the introduction of additional matter into the Bill was a contravention of the Standing Orders of the House of Lords. He hoped the Committee upon the present Bill would bear that circumstance in mind, and be careful, if possible, so to shape any Amendments they might introduce into the Bill as not to infringe the Standing Orders of the other House of Parliament. After what had been said by his right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board, and the general feeling which had been expressed on the part of the House, he presumed that the Bill would be read a second time and referred to a Hybrid Committee. It was not necessary, therefore, that he should say anything upon the particular merits of the question itself; but it was important that his right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board should have accepted himself the responsibility of framing an Instruction to the Committee, because, in that case, they had the special advantage of knowing what the system was which he advised. Very great public interest was felt in schemes of this sort, because the principles incidentally raised in them might have a material effect upon the interests of other districts. The main question involved in the present Bill was how far it was to be considered desirable that a large population, at a great distance off, should be allowed to appropriate water belonging to another watershed. The importance of that question could not be overrated. And it was desirable that the Hybrid Committee to which it was proposed to refer the Bill should be assisted in their labours, as far as possible, by having evidence before them which should elucidate the views of the Government. Such evidence would be far more valuable than any evidence from particular witnesses brought to support the views either of the promoters or opponents of the scheme. He hoped they would have this advantage in consenting to refer the present Bill to a Hybrid Committee.

MR. ROWLEY HILL said, that after the proposal which had been made by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, supported as it was by other hon. Gentlemen of great influence, he would, by the leave of the House, withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time.

SIR BALDWYN LEIGHTON said, he proposed to withdraw the Motion of which he had given Notice in favour of that which was proposed by the President of the Local Government Board, as they were substantially the same.

MR. SCLATER-BOOTH then moved—

"That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee of nine Members, Five to be nominated by the House and Four by the Committee of Selection, and that such of the Petitioners as shall have presented their Petitions against the Bill may, if they think fit, be heard before such Committee by their Counsel."

Motion *agreed to.*

Ordered, That such of the Petitioners as shall have presented their Petitions against the Bill on or before the 1st day of March next may, if they think fit, be heard before such Committee by their Counsel, and Counsel may be heard in support of the Bill against such Petitions.

That it be an Instruction to the Committee, that they have power to inquire into and report upon the present and prospective sufficiency of the water supply of the district which the Corporation of Liverpool are authorized to supply, and into the existence of any other available source of supply; and whether, having regard to the various interests affected by the scheme, and to the present and prospective requirements of the population in the Severn Valley as to water supply, fishing, navigation, and the scouring effect of floods, compulsory powers should be given to take water from the River Vyrnwy and its tributaries; and, if so, to what extent, and under what conditions, as to compensation water, or otherwise; and also what provisions are requisite for enforcing and securing such conditions."—(*Mr. Sclater-Booth.*)

QUESTIONS.

SEA FISHERIES COMMISSION—TRAWL OR BEAM FISHING.

Lord ELCHO asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he intends to ask Parliament for further power with a view to the better regulation of trawl net or beam trawl fishing, as recommended in the recent Report of the Sea Fisheries Commissioners?

Viscount SANDON: I have been asked by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department to answer this Question, as all matters connected with sea fisheries belong to the administration of the Board of Trade. I have only recently received from the Home Office a copy of the Report of the Commissioners who were appointed to inquire into certain questions connected with the sea fisheries. I am now giving my careful consideration to this Report, as well as to the Report of the Royal Commission of 1866 upon the Sea Fisheries; but, considering the Business already before Parliament, I cannot think, even supposing I find legislation to be desirable, that I could hope to make any progress this Session with a measure of this nature.

MINING ACCIDENTS COMMISSION.

Mr. MACDONALD asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If there be any prospect of any portion of the Evidence on Proceedings of what is designated a "Scientific Commission" on Mining Accidents being published before the close of the entire sittings of that body; if not, whether such a course is in harmony with the ordinary proceedings of Commissions of a similar kind?

Mr. ASSHETON CROSS, in reply, said, that this was a matter entirely in the hands of the Commissioners, and he had no power in the matter at all. He was informed by the Chairman of the Commission that the Commissioners did not see that any good purpose would be served by publishing any part of the evidence before the conclusion of their labours; and, in coming to that conclusion, they were not departing from the ordinary course.

Mr. MACDONALD gave Notice that, when the Vote for the payment of the expenses of the Commission came before the House in Committee, he should move that the sum of £1,700, set down for the purpose, should not be granted until their Report was published.

ARMY—REGULATION OF CORRESPONDENTS IN THE FIELD.

Mr. HOPWOOD asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it be the fact that Officers of the Staff in the recent wars in Zululand and Afghanistan have acted, or are acting, as paid correspondents to newspapers in the United Kingdom; is such employment undertaken with the approval of the General Commanding or of the authorities here or in India; if not, whether any Despatch or Memorandum, censuring or prohibiting such a practice, has been issued to the service here or in India by the Secretary of State for War, or H. R. H. Commanding in Chief; and, whether any formal repeal or cancelling of the Regulations of Correspondents in the Field "provisionally sanctioned," has been issued by the Secretary of State for War, or H. R. H. Commanding in Chief; and, if so, on what dates or dates have such Despatches or Memoranda been issued, and will he be kind enough to lay Copies upon the Table?

Colonel STANLEY: I have seen it stated that officers of the Staff have acted as correspondents of newspapers in Zululand; but I have no information on the subject. With reference to their having so acted in Afghanistan, that, I believe, was stated in a despatch of General Roberts; but, as I explained in answer to a Question which had been put, the Queen's Regulations are drawn up at home, and have no force in India. The employment of officers in such capacity had not, so far as I am aware, been undertaken with the approval of the authorities here. A Memorandum prohibiting such a practice has been issued by the Commander-in-Chief, and circulated among all general officers. This was of a recent date, about the end of last month, or the commencement of this. With regard to the formal repeal of the Regulations as to correspondents which are stated to be "provisionally sanctioned," I can say that, inasmuch as no Regulations have been issued, there have been none to cancel, so far as the War Department or Commander-in-Chief are concerned.

MR. HOPWOOD asked if the right hon. and gallant Gentleman would produce copies of the Memorandum he had mentioned?

COLONEL STANLEY said, he did not think the production of the Memorandum could add anything to the information of the House.

SALMON FISHERIES—THE SOLWAY FISHERIES.

MR. E. S. HOWARD asked the Secretary of State for the Home Departpart, Whether, having regard to the report of Mr. Walpole, one of the Inspectors of Fisheries, dated Jan. 24, 1880, on the subject of the Solway Fisheries, in which he states that the English fishermen have a right to complain of the state of the Law, and that their complaint in this respect can only be redressed by placing the whole Firth under uniform legislation, the Government will institute the inquiry into the subject which the Inspector further recommends with a view to such legislation?

MR. ASSHETON CROSS, in reply, said, he entirely agreed that there should be uniform legislation for the whole Firth; but there were difficulties in the way. The first step he had thought right to take was to give instructions that an English Inspector and a Scotch Inspector should proceed to the spot, and report to him on the subject.

POST OFFICE—POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK REGULATIONS.

MR. HIBBERT asked the Postmaster General, Whether his attention has been directed to the case of Elizabeth Morpeth, a married woman, who last year out of her earnings deposited £76 in the Post Office Savings Bank at Manchester, and, through the negligence or violation of trust of the Post Office officials there, was not only deprived of £48 of that sum, by its payment to her husband without the order of court required by Law, but was also refused payment of the balance of £28 without appeal to the County Court; and, whether, as this and other similar cases have occurred under the loose wording of Rule 8 (Post Office Savings Banks) as to deposits of married women, such Rule can be so amended and explained as to make it clear that the Post Office authorities will give full effect to the provisions of "The Married Women's Property Act, 1870?"

LORD JOHN MANNERS: My attention has been called to this matter. The facts are as follow:—The money (£76) was not all deposited last year—indeed, £30 is the largest sum which can be deposited in the Post Office Savings Bank in any one year by any one person. The sum of £60 odd was deposited by Mrs. Morpeth at various times before the passing of the Married Women's Property Act in 1870; but this amount had been reduced by withdrawals to £48 8*s.* 1*d.* when the husband's claim to the money was made in October last. This balance was clearly the property of the husband by law; and as he, when advancing his claim to it, complied with all the requirements of the Department in such cases, even to the production of the depositor's deposit book, at the time when payment was made to him, the money was paid in accordance with the 9th clause of the Regulations framed for carrying out the provisions of the Post Office Savings Bank Act. There was no alternative. The husband also laid claim to the sums —£28 odd—placed to the credit of the account after the passing of the Act of 1870, but this claim was resisted by the Department; and it was left either to the husband or to the wife to establish a title to that portion of the money in accordance with Section 9 of the Married Women's Property Act, 1870, by application to one of the judicial authorities therein mentioned. The husband took no action in the matter; but the depositor—the wife—did apply to the Salford County Court, and obtained an order in her favour with costs against her husband, and payment was made to her forthwith. The correspondence was conducted entirely by the Department in London, and not through the Manchester Post Office; and there is no foundation whatever for the statement that the depositor has been "deprived" of her money "through the negligence or violation of trust of Post Office officials." I have no knowledge of any similar cases having occurred. Paragraph 8 of *The Post Office Guide* states the substance of No. 9 of the Savings Bank Regulations dated the 13th of August, 1861, with an addition as regards the Married Women's Property Act, 1870. Possibly the reference to that Act might be more clearly expressed; but it does not appear that the paragraph, as it stands, has prevented the Act of 1870 from having the full effect which the Post Office authorities have always endeavoured to give it.

TURKEY—CAPTURE OF COLONEL SYNGE BY BRIGANDS.

MR. H. SAMUELSON asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he can give the House any information as to the reported outrage upon Colonel Synge near Tricovitza; whether the brigands who carried him off are known to be subjects of the King of the Hellenes, or notorious inhabitants of the vilayet of Salonica and its neighbourhood—subjects of the Porte, who have long been in the habit of committing depredations in the district; and, if they are Hellenic subjects, whether he can explain the existence of an armed band of Greek brigands in time of peace in Turkey, inland, at a distance of about one hundred miles from the Greek frontier?

MR. BOURKE: I have no doubt that every hon. Member present has seen an account of this circumstance in the newspapers. I am sure the House will perceive that, under existing circumstances, it would be extremely inexpedient for me to make any statement with regard to the facts alleged by the hon. Member in his Question.

MR. H. SAMUELSON: I beg to ask, not for any information that may hurt Colonel Synge in any way, but whether the hon. Gentleman has any information as to the nationality of the brigands who committed the outrage? To state that cannot do Colonel Synge any harm.

MR. BOURKE: I will not undertake the responsibility of saying that any statement I may make might not be injurious to Colonel Synge.

MR. H. SAMUELSON: I beg to give Notice that I shall call the attention of the House to this subject.

CYPRUS—TURKISH NEWSPAPERS.

MR. H. SAMUELSON asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether it is true that the Turkish newspaper "Uncid" has been suppressed by the Lord High Commissioner of Cyprus; and, if so, on what grounds?

MR. BOURKE, in reply, said, the newspaper in question had not been suppressed by the Lord High Commissioner of Cyprus. Some little time ago the Ottoman authorities applied to the authorities in Cyprus, with the view of having this paper stopped at the Post Office in Beyrout. The Post Office authorities at Beyrout applied to the Commissioner at Cyprus to have this paper stopped, both at Cyprus and Beyrout; and, acting under the precedents in existence of former Governments, orders were given that the paper should be stopped at the Post Office in Beyrout and in Cyprus. Of course, the English Post Offices in Turkey, existing only by permission of the Turkish Government, could not claim greater liberty for British persons, or greater rights of passage through the British Post Offices than the Turks. At the same time, the paper was not suppressed in Cyprus.

MOTIONS.

PRIVILEGE OF PARLIAMENT—IMMUNITY FROM ARREST.—RESOLUTION.

Mr. BLAKE, in rising to move—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the privilege of Immunity from Arrest, now enjoyed by Peers and Members of Parliament, is not for the public good, and ought to be abolished;"

said, if the House was not already wearied by its recent discussions of Privilege, he craved its indulgence while he rose that question in another form. The Privilege of which he desired to speak, though hoary with antiquity, and once, no doubt, of great value to Parliament and the nation, had now become almost obsolete, and was of such doubtful benefit that he pleaded, not for its continuance, but for its removal. He complained not of its breach, but of its observance. It was not his intention to go at length into its origin. It was sufficient to say that originally it formed one of a large number of similarly anomalous exemptions, by which the High Court of Parliament protected itself against the ordinary processes of the Common Law. Not only the persons of Members, but also those of their servants, were held free from arrest, while their lands and goods were also exempt from being taken in any form of execution. It appeared that the Privilege was first claimed by the House of Lords, who probably based their right upon their succession to the Great Council of the Kingdom. The first case on record was in the 19th year of Edward I., when the Master of the Temple petitioned the King for permission to distrain on the goods of the Bishop of St. David's. The reply of the King was—

> "It does not seem fit that the King should grant that they who are of his Council should be destrained in time of Parliament."

But whatever the origin of the Privilege might have been, it rapidly grew and extended itself, until it became a serious anomaly in the administration of justice. While Parliament was sitting, no writ or other process could be issued against any Member, or even against his servants. Members refused to attend as witnesses in a Court of Law, or to obey a writ of subpœna in Chancery. It was dangerous to bring an action at any time against a Peer, for the plaintiff might find himself committed for contempt, even after a long lapse of time. The public inconvenience reached its height during the reign of the later Stuarts. The officers of Parliament were continually acting in antagonism to those of the Law Courts and the Sheriffs, while the Houses were not unfrequently divided against each other. There were abundant cases in the Journals of the House of Commons, where the Speaker committed persons to prison for entering on the estates of Members, carrying away timber, lopping trees, digging coal, and fishing in their waters. The historian Hallam says—

> "Hardly anything could be done disagreeable to a Member of which he might not inform the House, and cause it to be punished."

When Privilege was thus used as a weapon of offence rather than as a shield of protection it became intolerable, and the general public demanded some alteration. By a series of Acts of Parliament this Privilege had been curtailed to its present limits. The 12 & 13 *Will.* III. c. 3, allowed actions to be brought against Members of both Houses, immediately after the Dissolution or Prorogation of Parliament. The Statute of 10 *Geo.* III. c. 50, enacted that any suit might at any time be brought against any Peer or Member of Parliament, their servants, or any other person entitled to Privilege of Parliament, except that the person of a Member of the House of Commons should not thereby be subjected to any arrest or imprisonment. The Motion which he (Mr. Blake) now made was—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the Privilege of Immunity from Arrest, now enjoyed by Peers and Members of Parliament, is not for the public good, and ought to be abolished."

To illustrate the law as it now stood, he would call the attention of the House to a case which occurred in August last, upon which the public Press commented at the time with pardonable severity. A defaulting debtor, who was a Peer, was summoned in a Metroplitan County Court for the sum of 48*s*., for coals sold to him by the plaintiff. The Peer claimed to be exempt from the jurisdiction of the County Court as respected personal process, and carried his claim so far as to state that he was also exempt from personal appearance at the County Court. The debt was not disputed, and an order of the Court was made for payment. This order was treated with contempt. Two courses were then open to the plaintiffs—either to take out an execution against the debtor's goods, or to apply for a judgment summons calling upon the defendant to show cause why payment, as ordered, was not made. The plaintiffs adopted the later course, and obtained a judgment summons against the noble defendant. In this, also, as in the former summons, his Lordship pleaded his Privilege as a Peer, and declined in any way to take cognizance of the proceedings. He even went so far as to give notice to the learned Judge, by letter, that—

> "In the event of his signing a warrant against him, he would be dismissed from his seat on the Bench, and all sorts of condign punishments would be visited upon the parties concerned."

His honour, the Judge, was reported to have said publicly in his Court, that—

> "The fact of this Privilege being claimed was so surprising to him that he had a difficulty in considering it possible that it should be advanced in answer to a just claim. He had, however, referred to a case which showed that the objection was well founded; and although he did not believe it was a correct view of the law he considered himself bound by the decision of Lord Denman. He hoped that the decision to which he referred would some day or other be altered by the law of common sense, and regretted that he had no power to help the plaintiffs."

The present mode of procedure was regulated by the Debtors' Act of 1869, 32 & 33 *Vict.* c. 62, which enacted—Section 4—that—

> "With the exceptions hereinafter mentioned, no person shall, after the commencement of this Act, be arrested or imprisoned for making default in payment of a sum of money."

Among the exceptions in Section 5 was the case of a person making default in payment of a debt due in pursuance of any order,

> "when it is proved that such a person has . . . the means to pay the sum . . . and has refused or neglected to pay the same."

It is further provided in the same section that

> "such imprisonment shall not operate as a satisfaction or extinguishment of the debt;"

as would have been the case under the old writ of *ca. sa.* The House would remember that, with reference to this case, he (Mr. Blake) put a Question, on the 13th of August last, to the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General, asking him if his attention had been called to it, and also if defaulting debtors who were Peers were entitled by law to such exemption; and, if so, if he had considered the desirability of repealing the exemption? The Attorney General, in his reply, said—

> "My attention has been called to the case mentioned in the Question, and the facts appear to be correctly represented. I may state that the judgment summons was issued against the noble Defendant to compel payment of an amount of £2 8*s*. for coals sold to him by the plaintiffs. I do not think it would be becoming in me to pronounce an opinion upon a point of law which has been decided by a competent Court. The learned Judge of the Brompton County Court is a man of great ability and experience, and I think we may presume that his decision was right. . . . . I should not myself be disposed to advocate an extension of the power of commitment for the non-payment of debt, or to interfere with the long established Privileges of the Peerage. It is to be regretted that the Privilege should have been relied upon in the case in question. The plaintiffs, however, may be consoled by the reflection that, as the noble Defendant thought proper, for the purpose of evading the payment of a debt, to envelope himself in the mantle of the Privileges of his order, he may be left to resort to the same mantle for the purpose of keeping himself warm. The plaintiffs can refuse again to supply the noble Lord with coals."—[3 *Hansard*, ccxlix. 910-11.]

Now, he (Mr. Blake) would admit that the case he had quoted was in itself so ridiculous and contemptible that it was unworthy of further remark. But, as affording an illustration of the offensive manner in which the musty and fusty Privilege of Peers might be used to defeat the ends of justice, it was of importance. The privilege of exemption from arrest on civil process was shared by Members of the House of Commons. There was, however, this distinction between the Members of the two Houses. Privilege of Peerage extended to all Peers and Peeresses, whether by birth, by creation, or by marriage, and also to Scotch and Irish Peers, even though they were not elected Representative Peers of the United Kingdom; whereas commoners had merely Privilege of Parliament, and enjoyed immunity from arrest, and only that while Parliament was sitting and for a limited number of days afterwards—generally assumed to be 40 days. The Privilege only extended to civil process, and formed no bar to arrest for treason, felony, misdemeanour, or even breach of the peace. In the interest of equal justice and of the Peerage itself, this immunity should be abolished. The simple question was, should any class of persons be placed above the law? Was it for the public good that there should continue to be amongst us a privileged class of persons exempt from the statutable penalties of fraud which attached to the rest of the community? It was difficult to see how there could be any but one answer to that question. Imprisonment for debt had been abolished. He had no desire to revive it. That was not the question. The question was, should any class of persons who had the means of payment treat the decrees of their Law Courts with contempt, and be allowed to plead that they were not amenable, while all other persons are, for the moral offence of evading payment of their just debts? By no surer method could any Member of that, or of the Upper House of Parliament, bring himself into contempt and ridicule than by availing himself of that Privilege in the manner of which they had been furnished with so humiliating an example. Though he (Mr. Blake) had quoted but one case, he had good reason to believe that it did not stand alone. He had received, since he gave Notice of his intention to bring forward this Motion, many communications from traders complaining of the difficulty they experienced in procuring payment of debts due from defaulting debtors having Privilege of Parliament. It was no secret that some Peers, whose estates were entailed, and whose life interest therein was heavily incumbered, had also given bills of sale, which included nearly all their personal effects, and which bills of sale protected them from seizure by other creditors. Hence it followed that as their persons were free from arrest or imprisonment, and their goods could not be distrained upon, their creditors were entirely at their mercy. He held in his hand an official Return just issued to Members of that House, of the number of prisoners confined in Holloway Gaol for the past year. In it he found that over 500 poor debtors were committed for "non-payment." It would be difficult to convince those persons that there was not in the matter of debt one law for the rich and another law for the poor. How could they who made the law justify the longer continuance of this inequality? Justice demanded either that they should at once open the doors of all the gaols to those who were now confined therein for non-payment of debt, or that all others, of whatever rank, who were guilty of the same offence should receive the same punishment. He did not know what the verdict of the House would be on the question which he had submitted to it by his Resolution; but of this he was sure, that outside that House there would be but one opinion—namely, that the continuance of a Privilege which operated so injuriously and unjustly was not for the public good, and ought to be abolished. With reference to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Charles Lewis), he (Mr. Blake) had but little to say. It related to a subject wholly and entirely distinct from that raised by his (Mr. Blake's) own Motion, and he would respectfully suggest to him the propriety of withdrawing it, and not mixing up questions which differed so widely. The bankruptcy of Members of that House, to which the proposed Amendment of the hon. Member for Londonderry related, had been provided for by the Bankruptcy Act, 32 & 33 *Vict.* c. 71, Sections 120 to 124. They were briefly as follows:—Sect. 120 enacted that privilege of Parliament should not benefit in bankruptcy. Sect. 121 enacted—

> "If a person, being a Member of the Commons House of Parliament, is adjudged bankrupt, he shall be and remain during one year from the date of the order of adjudication incapable of sitting and voting in that House, unless within that time, either the order is annulled, or the creditors who prove debts under the bankruptcy are fully paid and satisfied."

(122.) If the bankruptcy is not annulled, or the debts of the bankrupt fully paid or satisfied within the year, the seat of such Member shall be vacant. (123.) Mr. Speaker thereupon to issue a new Writ. It was not his intention to discuss these provisions then, and he hoped the hon. Member would not ask the House to discuss them in connection with his (Mr. Blake's) Motion. If the hon. Member considered those provisions were not sufficiently stringent, he would have ample opportunity of raising the whole question. Two Bills for amending and enlarging the provisions of the Bankruptcy Act were now before the House—one introduced by the Government, and one by private Members. Both those Bills were referred to a Select Committee, and he would suggest to the hon. Member that he would best effect the object he had at heart by getting his own name placed on that Committee, or, failing that, offering to the Committee such evidence as he might deem important. Should he not adopt either of these courses, he would have ample opportunity, when the Bills came down for discussion, of raising the important question to which his Amendment pointed. He would now conclude by formally moving the Motion which stood in his name.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the privilege of Immunity from Arrest, now enjoyed by Peers and Members of Parliament, is not for the public good, and ought to be abolished."—(*Mr. Blake.*)

Mr. CHARLES LEWIS, who had given Notice of an Amendment to the Resolution, remarked that unquestionably, during the last few years, all the tendency of legislation had been towards the abolition of arrest for debt. It was quite true that in the Debtor and Creditor Bill passed in 1860, and in the various County Court Acts passed during the last 20 years, there was a residue of imprisonment for debt in certain circumstances still left to our Courts of Law. That residue was, however, of a very limited character, and the hon. Gentleman the senior Member for Derby (Mr. M. T. Bass) had on several occasions proposed to do alway altogether even with the limited power of the County Courts in regard to imprisonment for debt. Indeed, all the tendency of public discussion, both in and out of the House, had been in that direction. The first part of his Amendment was to the effect—

> "That it was not advisable to extend the liability of any class of Her Majesty's subjects to arrest or imprisonment for debt."

It did not follow, however, that he was an advocate for keeping up the present power of imprisonment as regarded the unprivileged classes; but as the case put by the hon. Gentleman opposite had arisen from a discussion in the newspapers of a claim for £2 8*s*. for coals supplied, it did not appear to him that any practical good would result from the House discussing it. The latter part of his Amendment declared—

> "That it was advisable for the honour and dignity of this House that provision should be made for the immediate vacation of his seat by any Member who might become bankrupt or otherwise arrange or compound with his creditors under the Bankruptcy Laws."

The first Act which related to the bankruptcy of Members was passed in 1812, and the Preamble declared that—

> "Whereas it was necessary for the preservation of the dignity and independence of Members of Parliament that Members of the House of Commons who become bankrupt and do not pay their debts in full shall not retain their seats."

Similar provisions to those under the Bankruptcy Act of 1869 were in the Act providing for a temporary suspension of a Member's position for 12 months, and then if he did not pay his debts in full, his seat was absolutely vacated. The Acts of 1833, 1849, and 1869 continued these provisions. When the first-named Act was passed there existed none of those hybrid arrangements which were subsequently introduced—such as composition with creditors and liquidation under the sanction of the Court. At present, perhaps, 29-30ths of the cases which went into the Court of Bankruptcy were carried out by liquidation or composition. This case had happened—a Member had gone into the Court of Bankruptcy, had liquidated his affairs by arrangement, and there had been no other result than this—that the creditors had not been paid. He would ask the House whether that was a satisfactory state of things? In Norwich there was a saying that an empty sack could not stand upright. That saying rested on a physical law; but it also illustrated a moral law. The action of the House of Lords in the last few years was a pretty good guide to what would be an improvement in the law of the Lower House relating to the bankruptcy of its Members. By the Act 34 & 35 *Vict*. c. 50, passed in 1871, a Peer was disqualified from sitting and voting immediately on his bankruptcy; and he had not a year's licence or liberty to pay his creditors. Moreover, a Peer was disqualified under that Act if he made an arrangement of his affairs under bankruptcy, and not merely by form of bankruptcy. What had the Legislature done in other cases? The Education Act provided that if a member of the School Board was adjudged bankrupt, or entered into a composition or arrangement with his creditors, he should cease to be a member of the School Board, and that his office should thereupon become vacant. If that were so with the School Board, he would have thought it was a ten times *à fortiori* case that in that House they should keep themselves perfectly free, and on the highest pinnacle of independence, with reference to the personal relations of Members with their creditors. A similar provision to that which applied to members of the School Board was also enacted in 1869 with regard to mayors, aldermen, town councillors, and justices of the peace; but no alteration was made in the status of Members of Parliament who might compound with their creditors. He was sure that no Member of the House, whether as an individual or in respect of his private character, would desire the present immunity of Members to continue. The present state of things was also opposed to the principle of consolidation in the law, which tended to make the law uniform, and which it was now endeavoured to effect. He had been one of those who supported the system of imprisonment for debt until he saw that it had become an instrument of oppression and a means of obtaining power over small debtors by tradesmen of a certain class, who induced the wife to take credit in order to get the money out of the husband by threat of imprisonment. The House of Lords had set them a good example, and he hoped the House of Commons would evince a disposition to follow it. The hon. Gentleman concluded by moving the Amendment which stood in his name.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House, it is not advisable to extend the liability of any class of Her Majesty's subjects to arrest or imprisonment for debt, but that it is advisable for the honour and dignity of this House that provision should be made for the immediate vacation of his seat by any Member who may become bankrupt or otherwise arrange or compound with his creditors under the Bankruptcy Laws,"—(*Mr. Charles Lewis,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. HERSCHELL thought that there was a great deal to be said in favour of the proposition of the hon. Member for Londonderry; but it did not seem to him that that proposal necessarily conflicted with the Motion of the hon. Member for Leominster. What was the condition of things at the time when the Privileges of Members of Parliament and Peers in this connection arose? Arrest for debt was then an every day occurrence; but now, in theory at all events, the supposition of the law was that no person could be arrested or imprisoned for debt unless he was a person who could pay his debts and would not, and such a person was as fraudulent as many of those who found their way to prison on direct charges of fraud. No doubt, in the practical working of the law, many people were now sent to prison who really ought not to be there, and a great deal of mischief was done by the present system of imprisonment under the County Courts Acts. He fully conceded all that had been said on that point. The law ought to deal with all alike; and the higher a man's social position was the more blameable he was in case he avoided the payment of debts; and he did not think that if the Resolution of his hon. Friend were adopted anyone would find his way to prison who did not richly deserve it. He agreed with most that had fallen from the hon. Member for Londonderry. There might be cases of great hardship, such as had happened to innocent trustees in the City of Glasgow Bank, who deserved nothing but sympathy. No one would desire that such persons should be put in the same position as those who were to blame for fraudulent non-payment of money due. Subject to that, he agreed with the spirit and object of the remarks of the hon. Member for Londonderry, whose proposition ought, he thought, to be moved, not as an Amendment, but as a rider to the original Motion.

DR. CAMERON felt, with his hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Herschell), that both the propositions were such as would, to a great extent, commend themselves to the consideration of the House; and he would suggest, as a solution of the difficulty in which they found themselves, that the hon. Member for Londonderry should add the latter part of his Resolution to the Motion before the House, and in that way, by one amended Resolution, the House would affirm the two principles. The House was indebted to the hon. Member for Londonderry for having brought the matter before the House; but he (Dr. Cameron) did not think he quite exhausted the anomalies of the law as to bankruptcy and its effect upon a Member's seat in Parliament, for it was a remarkable fact that sequestration, a process in every respect analogous to English bankruptcy, did not forfeit the seat of an hon. Member of that House. Such an anomaly certainly should not exist. As to the hypothetical case of hardship that had been quoted by the hon. and learned Gentleman who spoke last—the case of a trustee in the City of Glasgow Bank failure, who had been made bankrupt from no fault of his own—he must not forget that under present circumstances, unless that trustee could manage to get his bankruptcy annulled before the end of the year, he would be compelled to vacate his seat in the House. As to the privilege of freedom from arrest for debt, he did not think the hon. Member (Mr. Lewis) could have been in earnest when he based his Resolution on the objection to extend the principle for arrest for debt. As had been pointed out, although a change might take place in the customs on this subject, it was in the highest degree improbable that any Member of this House, or the House of Lords, would ever become a victim to that change. The privilege which they enjoyed was not by any means unmitigated benefit, for in consequence of their freedom from liability to arrest for debt it had been held that Members of Parliament could not enjoy the privilege of bail should they find themselves in the position of being in custody for some bailable offene. He thought there was very considerable room for doubt as to the decision of the County Court Judge in the case which had been under discussion; for he found, by reference to a number of cases in the valuable work on Parliamentary Practice of Sir Erskine May, that in recent years a number of cases had occurred in which Members of both Houses of Parliament had been committed for contempt of Court. Those cases, or some of them, had been brought before the House of Commons, and by repeated Resolutions it had been held that it was not desirable to interfere with the ordinary exercise of the law in such circumstances. It struck him very forcibly that had the same course been pursued in the case of the Peer in which his hon. Friend (Mr. Blake's) Motion had originated the Peer might have the matter brought before the House as a Breach of Privilege, but nothing further would have resulted from it.

Sir EDWARD COLEBROOKE hoped the Amendment would be either moved substantively, or as a rider to the Resolution. The matter might find a place, he thought, when the Bankruptcy Bill of the Government was dealt with. The reason why the proposition should remain a separate Resolution, and not be mixed up with the Law of Bankruptcy, was, that it was a matter which stood by itself, as the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Lewis) had stated, under a very different state of the law. The Law of Arrest might be abused in the main so as to interfere with the ordinary Business of the House; but the time had gone by for the occurrence of anything of that kind, and they had all come to wonder why an abuse of that kind should have lasted so long. It was not because efforts had not been made to repeal the law, for he remembered giving assistance some years ago to Mr. Moffatt in an endeavour to get rid of it. Mr. Moffatt's Bill was favourably received, and he thought it had passed a second reading; but owing to several influential Leaders in the House having set themselves against it it was ultimately thrown out. He thought the hon. Gentleman who introduced the Motion to-night might take warning from that circumstance, and not be too enthusiastic about success merely upon the first Motion. There were, perhaps, the petty evils in this matter that were found to belong to all Bills, and they would have to make provision for particular cases in which it might not be easy to calm the apprehensions of Members. For instance, there might be a dread that they might become liable to arrest when going to attend a Committee. The Resolution should be followed up by a Bill; and he trusted that the subject would not be incumbered with any mention of the House of Lords, for he considered it quite enough that they should deal with their own House. He thought that, with the assistance of the Government, the Motion and the Bill might be passed, and so relieve them of the scandal and disgrace arising from the exercise of the present Privilege.

Mr. GREGORY agreed that it would be as well if the two Houses were to cooperate on this question, although he did not see how they could do so without joining in an Act of Parliament. The exemption from arrest now enjoyed by Members of that House subtracted from the jurisdiction of the Courts of Law; and hon. Members should set an example of submission rather than of opposition to the jurisdiction of the Courts. As regarded the cases of composition, it was a monstrous thing that a Member who had compounded with his creditors, and whose action resulted in a dividend to them of only a very small sum, should be allowed to retain his seat in the House. The Rules of the House of Lords were more stringent. The question, however, was one which might be usefully dealt with by the Committee which was now sitting upon the Bankruptcy Bill; and it would be unwise to hamper the deliberations of that Committee by passing any Resolution on the subject at the present moment.

SIR GEORGE BOWYER: I rise to Order, Mr. Speaker. I wish to know, before this debate proceeds further, if you will inform the House whether it is in Order, and proper and convenient, that a Resolution should be brought before this House dealing with the Privileges of the other House of Parliament?

MR. SPEAKER: The Resolution proposed by the hon. Member for Leominster is simply a Resolution of this House; and I am not prepared to say that it is not competent for hon. Members of this House to invite the House to express an opinion in reference to matters of Privilege affecting both Houses of Parliament.

SIR HENRY JAMES hoped that the proposition contained in the two Resolutions which had been brought before the House would be discussed separately. The privilege of being exempt from arrest for debt was not now of much practical value. It was a mere theoretical exemption; and it might, therefore, be well to abolish that which created an anomaly between different classes in the State. In his opinion, however, the House should proceed with some caution in the direction indicated by the Amendment of the hon. Member for Londonderry. When it was necessary that a person should possess a property qualification before becoming a Member of that House, the fact of his becoming a bankrupt and so losing that qualification might have been important. If the Amendment of the hon. Member for Londonderry were agreed to, no time would be allowed to a Member to either annul his bankruptcy or to pay his debts. Thus, in the case of a Member becoming a bankrupt and ceasing to be a Member of the House, the constituency might be put to the trouble and cost of a new election; and yet, after all, it might turn out that the Member ought not to have been made bankrupt at all. This would go far beyond the legislation of former times, which suspended a Member from his functions for 12 months, and allowed him to return to them if, in the interval, he obtained his discharge. The motives which weighed with the House of Lords in the Act of 1834-5, relating to Scotch and Irish Peers, should press with far greater force in relation to those Members; for not only was their position to be considered, but also that of their constituents, who might desire to retain their services, particularly if no moral wrong had been committed. There was special reason for consideration in the case of those who were engaged in manufacturing and commercial pursuits, and subject to all their viscissitudes, and who might become bankrupt without any blame attaching to them. The argument was that if a gentleman was not always able to pay all his debts he should be suspended; but he was afraid there were at least some of the Members in the present House—he hoped they were not many—who, if they were asked whether in the whole course of their career they had ever been in that position, would have to admit the fact. He thought the question was one which ought to be approached with caution, and would be much better dealt with in a Bill than by a crude and broad Resolution like that now brought forward. The details of the subject could thereby be much more readily discussed than in a debate on the general terms of a Motion.

MR. ASSHETON CROSS said, he did not desire, after what had fallen from the hon. and learned Gentleman (Sir Henry James) and others who had spoken in favour of the Resolution, to go into the matter at any length. He thought that in both the Resolution and the Amendment there was something which they could find to agree upon; though, for his part, he thought there was more shadow than substance. For his own part, he should be prepared to vote for the last part of the Amendment of his hon. Friend (Mr. Charles Lewis), though he quite thought that great caution was required in the matter. Any question affecting the Privileges of the House of Lords must be delicate ground, and the amount of time the House had had to consider the question was insufficient. He quite agreed that persons who were Members of the House, and who had most important duties to perform both in the House and in the Committees upstairs—duties relating to large and important transactions of all kinds—should not be liable to be arrested at any moment a creditor might think fit to set the law in motion. He was reminded by the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Sir Henry James) that it was one thing to suspend a man, and quite another to *ipso facto* expel him without inquiry, and especially if there was no fraud attached to it. It might be right that, in the case of bankruptcy, a Member should be suspended from his functions for a time, but, at all events, without affecting his constituents; however, as the matter would, in all probability, be considered by the Committee about to sit on the subject of Bankruptcy Law, he could not help thinking that it would be the wiser course for both the Motion and the Amendment to be withdrawn, and that the hon. Member should satisfy himself with having drawn attention to the subject; for he had, at all events, gained his point so far, that he had brought that important matter to the attention of the House.

Sir WILLIAM FRASER suggested to the hon. Member for Leominster the propriety of omitting from his Resolutions all reference to the Peers. He could not help thinking, notwithstanding the Speaker's ruling, that they were treading on dangerous ground.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I rise to make a suggestion on the point which has just been referred to by the hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir William Fraser), though not for a moment, Sir, questioning what has already fallen from you, and which, if not sufficiently supported by your own authority, is, unquestionably, upon its merits. There is what I may call a comity prevailing between the House of Lords and the House of Commons; and I have known instances when proposals made in this House which were unquestionably in the power of Members to make, and within the jurisdiction of this House to entertain, have been withdrawn simply on that ground. It does not follow that it is to be a universal maxim that under no circumstances are we to entertain questions affecting the Privileges and immunities of the House of Lords. I should decline to assent to any abstract Resolution of the kind; but I confess I am strongly prepared to adopt the view of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Taunton (Sir Henry James), and vote for the Motion in regard to Members of this House; but I think the Motion would be very greatly improved, and I should be relieved from a difficulty which to me is insurmountable, if the suggestion made by the hon. Gentleman opposite is adopted, and all that relates to the House of Lords omitted from the Resolution.

Mr. BLAKE said, he was willing to amend the Resolution by omitting the mention of Peers.

Mr. SPEAKER pointed out that, as there was an Amendment before the House, the Resolution could not be amended until that Amendment was withdrawn or otherwise disposed of.

Mr. CHARLES LEWIS said, he would be glad to relieve the House from any difficulty by withdrawing his Amendment, if the Mover of the Resolution would consent to withdraw also; but he would not do so to allow the Motion to be amended.

Question put.

The House *divided:*—Ayes 111; Noes 128: Majority 17.—(Div. List, No. 21.)

Question, "That those words be there added," put, and *negatived.*

PARLIAMENT—DURATION OF PARLIAMENT.—RESOLUTION.

Mr. J. HOLMS rose to move—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the duration of any future Parliament should not exceed five years."

That, he considered, was a proposal of a very moderate character in itself; and it was one, as it appeared to him, that would benefit the country at large. He admitted that the conduct of the Government with reference to the continued existence of the present Parliament had been perfectly within the law of usage; but it must be apparent that enormous obligations had been entered into during the lifetime of this Parliament which were not contemplated when it was called together. The map of Europe had been re-drawn. The map of Africa had also been changed; and it was clear that the Government were at this moment engaged in changing the map of Asia. A short time ago, the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Colonies, at Tewkesbury, stated that Her Majesty's Government had matured many measures that, in all probability, would occupy the time of Parliament this Session, and that he saw no reason why this, the seventh Session of Parliament, should not be capable of doing good work. Ministers were entirely within their right to continue Parliament even up to the very end of seven years; and the speech of the Colonial Secretary indicated the possibility of straining the law up to the complete point; and, indeed, by the principle which he laid down a Ministry which possessed the confidence of the country might repeal the Septennial Act and extend the Parliament beyond the period of seven years. Well, so far as continuing the seven years, he entirely supported Her Majesty's Government in the course they had pursued. They had law—certainly they had precedent — on their side. Within a century there were four Parliaments which lasted seven Sessions all but 10 weeks; one of which lasted, indeed, within seven weeks, of seven years. Again, Her Majesty's Government had usage on their side. Since the year 1832 there were 11 Parliaments, 10 of which came to an end, not by, but against, the will of the Minister, simply because the Government were defeated. There was but one Parliament which could be put in contrast with the present Parliament, and that was the Parliament of 1859. It was opened by Her Majesty in person in May, and the first Session concluded at the usual time in August. It was a short Session; but it was a Session, and some good work was done in it. Six Sessions followed, and the Parliament was dissolved in 1865. It had existed so long because the Ministry had a distinct majority from the beginning to the end, and considered that it was wise and for the benefit of the country that there should be a seventh Session. That Parliament had at its head a Minister who would always be regarded as one of the leading statesmen of the country—Lord Palmerston. That noble Lord had for Colleagues the Earl of Clarendon, Lord John Russell, and for his Chancellor of the Exchequer the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich.

MR. GLADSTONE: No.

MR. J. HOLMS: Well, he begged the right hon. Gentleman's pardon; but he understood that he was a Member of the Government which existed from 1859 to 1865.

MR. GLADSTONE: No, no.

MR. J. HOLMS: It was evident that the present Government interpreted the Act as though it enabled them to remain in office for seven years, and he hoped the House would say that such ought not to be the case. They had departed, to some extent, from the custom which was carried out from 1780 down to 1837. According to that custom, they had Parliaments of only six years' duration. Hallam, the historian, said that that custom established substantially that six, not seven, years constituted the natural life of a House of Commons; and he added that "an irregularity in that respect might lead to consequences which most men might deplore." It was for them now to put their foot down firmly, and say that no Parliament should sit for seven years again. They were at the present time adding another precedent to the solitary case of the Parliament of 1859; and it would hereafter be said that both Liberal and Conservative Governments, when they had power at their back, had continued in office for the full legal term. By his Motion the question divided itself into two considerations—the one historical, the other practical. As regarded the historical part of the question, he might remind the House that immediately after the Revolution of 1688 the Parliament of England laid down one clear and distinct principle—namely, that the people of England should govern themselves, and to that end they passed the Triennial Act. That Act was not hastily passed, for the Parliament in which it was passed lasted six years and six months, and the Bill was well considered before it was agreed to; and during more than 20 years the Triennial Act was in force, and no one could doubt, who was acquainted with the facts, that that period was one of great success as regarded art, commerce, and literature. But, although it was a period which could be turned to with satisfaction, the Parliament of 1715 passed the Septennial Act. That Act was passed for a temporary purpose; but, notwithstanding that fact, it was allowed to become permanent. But the people had never been consulted on the subject; and he thought he might safely say that the Act had never been heartily accepted by the House of Commons. During the last century the subject had been frequently debated, very often as forming a part of the great question of Parliamentary Reform; and on four occasions it was discussed this century on its own merits, and on each occasion there were a considerable number of the House in favour of the repeal of the Act. He would ask the House to bear in mind the great difference that existed between the condition of the country in 1716, politically, socially, and commercially, and its present condition—the increase of its population, the greater extent of its Colonies, and its increased wealth and expenditure. Considering all this, he thought he was not wrong in saying that seven years now were practically as long as a generation was then. In 1716 the population of the United Kingdom was 6,000,000, now it amounted to 35,000,000. The expenditure then was £7,000,000, now it was £80,000,000. He could not say what the number of electors was in 1716, but in 1760 it amounted to 160,000; now the number was about 3,000,000, while the population of our Colonies had risen from 2,000,000, which included 1,500,000 in the United States, or, for the purposes of comparison, 500,000 to 13,000,000, apart altogether from India. The question of locomotion had, to his mind, a most important bearing on this question. At the period of passing the Septennial Act a man was the least transportable species of luggage it was possible to find. In the year 1750 there was a coach only once a month from Edinburgh to London, and it took 12 days to complete a journey which could now be made in 10 hours. The other day there was a great election at Liverpool, at which 50,000 votes were taken. The Writ was issued on one Friday; the election took place on the following Friday; and the result was flashed to all parts of the Kingdom at 8 o'clock on the day of polling. In 1784 an election took place in the City of Westminster. It lasted for 46 days, although there were less than 19,000 votes recorded. Let it also be remembered that in the middle of last century there was a war which lasted during seven years; but in the middle of the present century there was a war between pretty much the same combatants which only lasted for seven weeks. These historical aspects of the case showed the changed circumstances of the times, and, he thought, made it clear that the more rapid movement of events, and the increased facilities for locomotion, rendered necessary some such change as he proposed to the acceptance of the House. So much for the historical view of the question. He would now refer to one or two practical points in connection with the subject. He knew that he should be told—and truly told—that our Parliamentary system was one that had drawn forth the admiration of all those countries in the world which had adopted a Parliamentary form of government. As an illustration of this fact, he was in Paris in 1870, when the French Assembly commenced existence under a Parliamentary system; and he heard the President of that Body tell the assembled Deputies that he had been to London in order to consult the Speaker of the House of Commons as to the Rules followed in the Imperial Parliament of this country. This was a high, as it was also a deserved, compliment to our system; but let it not be forgotten that neither France nor any of the other countries which had based their Constitution to some extent upon that of England had adopted the principle of septennial Parliaments. America had adopted two years; France and Germany three years; Holland, four years; and Spain and Italy five years. What had this House itself done? Whenever it had discussed the duration of Parliaments for our Colonies seven years had never even been mentioned. In some cases the triennial period had been adopted, and in others quinquennial Parliaments had been ordered. Another practical consideration in connection with the question was the economy of time. It must be perfectly well known that in septennial Parliaments there was very little work done in the last two Sessions when the Parliaments lasted to their normal close, and that, therefore, a great deal of valuable time was cut to waste. *The Times* newspaper—an organ whose *dicta*, he supposed, were much respected by hon. Members opposite—had an article immediately upon the re-assembling of Parliament after the Easter Recess of last year, which contained a sentence with every word of which he heartily concurred. *The Times* said—

> "Half the Session is over, and for all the work that has been done this might almost as well have been the opening day."

This was perfectly true; and he put it to the House and the country that they could not afford to lose an occasional year or two. He could not but think that a more frequent appeal to the country than once in seven years would produce more method and greater earnestness in the political work of the House of Commons, alike with regard to great measures and mere administrative detail. Macaulay, Brougham, and Romilly were all opposed to the Septennial Act; and a host of other great political thinkers and statesmen. He might be asked why he had fixed on five years, and had not proposed to restore the Triennial Act? His reply was that he was not in favour of triennial Parliaments, on account of the principle laid down that no Parliament should continue to sit for its full legal term. A wise Minister would always dissolve a year earlier if the country were in a peaceful condition, and then, practically, the duration of Parliament would be four years—a period long enough for the discharge of good and efficient work. He was opposed to triennial Parliaments, if only on the ground that there would be an election after every second Session, and it would be quite impossible for new Members in that time to understand the ways of the House at all. When triennial Parliaments existed they did not average more than two years and seven months, which was too short a period. With regard to the objections which might be urged to his proposed quinquennial Parliaments, there were only two he had heard which were of any importance, and, curiously enough, they were diametrically opposed the one to the other. The one was that there would be fewer elections, and the other was that there would be more elections. He admitted that, on the average, there would be fewer elections. He found that from the year 1802 to 1832, a period of 30 years, there were nine Parliaments, the average duration of which was less than three years and four months; whilst from 1833 to 1874, a period of 41 years, there were 10 Parliaments, averaging three years 11 months and 24 days. Taking the whole of those 19 Parliaments, he calculated their average duration at three years seven months and eight days. But the question of averages did not really come into play. His object in advocating quinquennial Parliaments was to provide a regulation for a discovered danger—a safeguard against the danger of Parliaments running to extreme lengths. As to the other objection, that we should have more elections, his own belief was that the number would be pretty much the same as it was now, and he doubted very much whether the expenses would at all be increased by the proposed change. The House had to consider what the people outside would think in regard to the question of expense, which was not confined to the candidates. The blunders of the Government for one week would cost the country more than five times the expense of a General Election. The shortening of the duration of Parliament would have a direct influence on the finances of the country. If the Government had to go to the country at the end of every fourth year they would very likely be economical during the whole duration of the Parliament. Of course, although the Parliament came to an end, the Administration might continue to exist—nay, they might increase their majority at the new Election. The hon. Member for North Staffordshire (Mr. Hanbury), who had given Notice of an Amendment to his Resolution, took some interest in foreign affairs; he asked him to remember this fact—Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury had at Berlin added considerably to the territory of this country, and immense obligations were incurred by our Protectorate of Asia Minor. But while framing a new Constitution for Bulgaria, what was the first and foremost part of it? It was this—

> "The territorial limits of the Principality of Bulgaria can neither be enlarged nor contracted without the consent of the great National Assembly."

It would have been well, indeed, had the same principle applied to this country during the last two years. Looking to the events which had recently taken place, and the serious obligations which had been imposed on the country without the consent of Parliament, he thought it due to those they represented to enter a protest against such a state of things, and, to avoid the recurrence of such difficulties and dangers, to move—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the duration of any future Parliament should not exceed five years."

MR. J. COWEN said, he had great pleasure in seconding the Resolution of his hon. Friend the Member for Hackney (Mr. J. Holms). After his able and exhaustive statement, little remained to be said in support of it. The suggested change would have to encounter, no doubt, the stereotyped set of adverse prophecies; but its supporters need not, therefore, be discouraged. Evil forebodings as to the result of a new course of action were more easily found than sound arguments. There was no established custom in connection with their representative system—however anomalous, however indefensible, however inconsistent—that had not found ardent champions to assert its value, to insist on its sacredness, and to predict the ruin that would inevitably ensue if profane reformers dared to touch it. Their repeated failures might have taught them the folly of attempting to foretell the future; but prophets were not soon abashed. Whatever crop failed, there was always an abundant harvest of them. The proposition before the House was not an untried and dangerous novelty. It was not a wild "leap in the dark," nor a heedless "shooting of Niagara." It was the adoption, in a modified form, of a time-honoured Constitutional practice. "Frequent and new Parliaments"—such was the ancient phrase—had been a point in every Reform programme for generations. Annual Parliaments, or, to speak more correctly, Sessional Parliaments, were the principle of the English Constitution; and they had certainly been the unquestionable practice of this country for centuries. Mr. Prynne, a plodding, painstaking, but somewhat verbose political antiquary, was appointed Keeper of the King's Records in the Tower after the Restoration. When put in that office he collected all the parchments committed to his charge, and had them assorted, arranged, and tabulated. Some had been destroyed, some damaged. But those that he could decipher he copied, and re-published in a book entitled *Parliamentary Writs Revived.* From the catalogue then printed, it was shown that during the 143 years that immediately preceded the accession of Charles I. there had been 103 new Parliaments. When they considered that Kings frequently broke the law, and failed to call a Parliament; that some of the Writs were lost, and others of them were illegible, this catalogue of Mr. Prynne's sustained his (Mr. Cowen's) argument that Parliaments—at least during that period—were frequent. Mr. Hakewell, a gentleman in a position to obtain correct information, published about the same time a book entitled *The Manner of Holding Parliaments in England.* In that volume a list of the Speakers in the House of Commons was given. Every new House chose a fresh Speaker. The list of these functionaries given by Mr. Hakewell, and the list of Writs given by Mr. Prynne, tallied. The one corresponded with the other. During the Recess an interesting Blue Book was issued on the Motion of the hon. and gallant Member for Kidderminster (Sir William Fraser), entitled *The Roll of Parliament.* It contained the information got together by Prynne and Hakewell, with further details. The whole combined to confirm and sustain his (Mr. Cowen's) contention that Parliaments, up to the time of the Stuarts, were either Sessional or annual. The late Earl Russell, in the last discussion on this question, maintained that the assertion that annual Parliaments were the principle of the English Constitution was an historical fallacy. A statement made by that noble Earl on such a subject—or, indeed, on any subject—was entitled to respect, and should be considered with deference. But his Lordship, on the occasion in question, gave his authority for his statement, and, unfortunately, that was not a dependable one. He justified his argument by quoting extracts from the writings of that not very scrupulous placeman and pensioner, Sir Richard Steele. He (Mr. Cowen) could occupy the House for hours reading quotations having the very opposite meaning, and upholding the very opposite opinion, from eminent lawyers, distinguished statesmen, and influential political writers. He would not, however, weary the House with such an infliction; but compress into a sentence or two the opinions of men entitled to as much—in his judgment to more—confidence than that of the editor of *The Tatler.* Mr. Prynne, in the preface to the book just quoted from, said—

> "The power of the Representatives continued no longer in force than during the Session of the particular Parliaments to which they were summoned, when they presently ceased to be knights, citizens, and burgesses in any succeeding Parliaments or Councils, unless newly elected and restored to serve in them by the King's new Writs."

Mr. Samuel Johnson—not the lexicographer, but a writer of great influence of the time of the Revolution of 1688—said—

> "We will never be better for this Revolution till we have a settlement of Parliaments. Our ancient right of anniversary Parliaments and nothing else can set the Government to rights. I wish that all our rights were reduced to one line, which is our right to have a Parliament every Kalends of May."

In an essay by the same author, entitled *Concerning Parliaments*, published in 1693, he said—

> "Our ancestors would no more have dreamed of having an old and stale Parliament cut into new Sessions than of having an old moon cut into new stars."

Mr. Wynne, a celebrated writer on the Law of Parliament, said in his *Dialogues*—

> "The law formerly had as little idea of a Member of Parliament being fixed for more than a year than it had of a parish officer being chosen for more than 12 months."

Sir Robert Raymond—who was Solicitor General to Queen Anne, Attorney General to George I., and afterwards Chief Justice of the King's Bench—asserted in a discussion on this subject, that a "prorogation" of Parliament was against the law of the land, and that every departure from annual elections was not only illegal, but mischievous. Mr. Archibald Hutchinson, another Parliament man of distinction, said that frequent and new Parliaments were more valuable than all the other reforms claimed. The ancient Constitution, he added, was in favour of annual Parliaments, and not triennial. Dean Swift—who was sent by Sir William Temple to see King William, with a view of inducing him to consent to reduce the duration of Parliaments—wrote—

> "As to Parliaments, I adored the wisdom of that Gothic institution which made them annual. For who sees not that while such Assemblies are permitted to have a longer duration there grows up a commerce of corruption between the Ministry and the Deputies, wherein they both find their accounts to the manifest danger of liberty?"

He further said that—

> "Our liberty could never be placed upon a firm foundation till the ancient laws should be revived, by which our Parliaments were made annual."

Lord Somers, in his plan of reform, advocated biennial Parliaments; and in the famous Petition presented by Lord Grey in 1773, from the Society entitled "Friends of the People," annual Parliaments constituted one of the main points. But if these authorities were not sufficient, he (Mr. Cowen) would quote one, the force of which even Earl Russell himself would have admitted if he had still been spared to them. At a famous meeting of Whig statesmen and politicians, held on the 20th of March, 1780, at the King's Arms Tavern, Westminster, the following resolution was unanimously adopted. Mr. Charles James Fox was in the chair on the occasion, and Mr. Sheridan submitted the motion—

> "That annual Parliaments are the undoubted right of the people and law of England; and that the Act that prolonged their duration was subversive of the Constitution, and a violation on the part of the Representatives of the sacred trust reposed in them by their constituents."

He (Mr. Cowen) contended—from evidence supplied by Mr. Prynne, Mr Hakewell, and the Blue Book recently published—that the custom of this country up to the time of the Stuarts was to hold Sessional or annual Parliaments; and from the authorities submitted, he held that that was the principle of the Constitution. Two Acts passed in the reign of Edward III. declared that Parliaments ought to be held annually, if need be. The testimony he had supplied, and the opinions he had quoted, proved that that was not only the principle, but the practice of this country up to the period named. Charles I. introduced a new system. He attempted to tax and govern the people without a Parliament. But in the 16th year of his reign a Bill was passed, requiring the King to call a Parliament every three years. If the King failed, neglected, or refused to do that, the Lord Chancellor and the Keeper of the Great Seal could summon the Peers and issue Writs for the election of Members of the House of Commons. If, for any reason, these officials neglected to discharge that duty, it could be undertaken by 12 Peers. If they failed, the Sheriffs in the different counties could proceed to the election without Writs. But if the Sheriffs, the Peers, the great Officers of State, and the King all evaded their responsibility, the people themselves could undertake the work. The citizens in cities, the freeholders in counties, and the burgesses in boroughs could meet on their own motion and elect Representatives; and if anyone so elected refused to obey the mandate of his constituents, he was liable to fine, if not imprisonment. It might not be generally known, but it was a fact of some interest, that this Act was copied from one passed by the Spaniards in the Kingdom of Arragon and Castile some years previous to meet an analogous position of affairs to the one that existed in England under the Stuart King. This Act establishing triennial Parliaments continued in operation until the reign of Charles II. That Monarch regarded it as an invasion of his Royal Prerogative, and as lowering him in the estimation of his brother Sovereigns. He said—with what truth he (Mr. Cowen) did not profess to know—that foreign Princes refused to enter into Treaties with this country as long as the Triennial Act remained in operation, because such Treaties would be dependent for their existence on the temporary and transient impulses and caprices of the people. He appealed to Parliament to repeal the Act, and the Parliament then sitting was an obsequious one. It was filled by servile placemen, and was known by the well-merited *soubriquet* of "The Pensioners' Parliament." In 1694, at the instance of the Duke of Devonshire, a Bill re-establishing the system of triennial Parliaments was introduced into the House of Lords. The King had put his veto on a Bill of a like purport that had passed both Houses of Parliament some years previously. At the time referred to, circumstances favoured his accepting it. There were special reasons why he should stand well in the opinion of the House of Commons. He had been engaged in expensive wars on the Continent, and required at that moment £5,000,000 to pay the debts he had incurred. The Queen, too, was ill, and likely to die. The King knew that his position in the country would be greatly weakened by the death of his Consort. For the double purpose, therefore, of obtaining the necessary money and securing the good opinion of the House of Commons, he assented to the Bill introduced by the Duke of Devonshire, although he had opposed a like measure so recently. The object of the Bill, broadly stated, was to curb the power of the Crown, to curtail the corrupting influence of the Court, and to increase the authority of the constituents over their Representatives. Nine Parliaments were elected under the Triennial Act; and the testimony of all historians goes to prove that its action was beneficial; that the liberties of the people were strengthened by it; and the authority of the country abroad was augmented and sustained. It was repealed in 1716 in a somewhat extraordinary manner. At the General Election held in 1714 the Whigs had obtained a majority; but during the year afterwards the first Stuart rising occurred. This was put down with fierce and almost brutal severity by the Hanoverians. A natural and, he (Mr. Cowen) was free to confess, in his judgment, an honourable and generous re-action was generated by the cruelties of the conquering party. The Hanoverians, feeling and knowing this, were afraid to appeal to their constituents at the time legally prescribed by law, and they passed an Act that not only increased the length of Parliaments in future, but the length of the one that was then in existence. In other words, they made a law that kept themselves in power and in place four years longer than they were justly entitled to remain. It was the grossest and most outrageous act of unconstitutional aggression that they had any record of in modern history. There was no assault on popular freedom to be compared to it since Charles I. attempted to collect ship money. The Act, therefore, that his hon. and gallant Friend opposite (Colonel Alexander) was going to defend was tainted at its birth. It was the historical memorial of an unhappy era, and an .evil event. It was opposed at the time by independent Members of both the Whig and the Tory Parties. There was recorded, on the Books of the House of Lords, an able, logical, even eloquent protest againt the Act, signed by 30 of the most influential Peers, beginning with the Duke of Somerset, and ending with Lord Salisbury. Lord Grosvenor—speaking and acting in the name of the Whig Party in 1817—concluded an exhaustive and indignant speech against the Septennial Act by declaring that it was a violation of the rights and liberties of the people. He said, further, that the Act repealed itself, and ought to be erased from the Statute Book, which it disgraced. It repealed itself, because the Act cited the reason why it was passed, and that reason had ceased to operate. Its supporters apologized for—they did not attempt to defend it—on the ground that it was a temporary measure, passed in troublous times, to meet exceptional circumstances. When those troubles terminated, and when those circumstances ceased, it was promised that it should be repealed. That promise, however, had not been kept. By the Preamble of the Bill, four purposes were sought to be served by it. First, it was designed to defeat the intrigues of the Pretender; second, to circumvent the machinations of a powerful and restless Papist faction; third, to lessen and allay the heat and irritation—such was the language used—that attended elections; and, fourth, to reduce the costs of contests. There was now no Pretender to the Throne of England. The last of the Stuarts—like the last of the Capulets, or the last of the Mohicans—had long since gone to swell the "great majority." The dreaded Papal faction had vanished into thin air. It existed only, if it existed at all, as a heated hallucination in the minds of weak women and weaker men. The disturbances that formerly distinguished elections had not been destroyed, it was true, but they had been diminished. There was little of the roysterous rioting that once characterized those trials of Party strength. Polls could not now be kept open 10, 12, or 15 days, during which all the corrupt influences in a constituency were let loose. The law now prevented excessive expenditure for agency, for display, and for refreshments, and the votes were collected in a quiet and orderly manner by ballot. He (Mr. Cowen) did not contend that their electoral system was perfect. On the contrary, he thought it capable of great amendment. But he did contend that it was better than it was. There might be heat, and there might be irritation; but these excesses were more characteristic of a period preceding the election than of the elections themselves. The cost of contests had not been reduced by the Act. He did not say they had been increased by it; but he did say that the electoral expenditure at present largely exceeded what it was 100 years ago. In 1764, the average cost of an election was £500 or £600. From Returns supplied to that House, they knew that the average cost of a county contest at the General Election in 1874 was £11,000; while the average cost of a borough contest was £2,500. Those figures, as everybody was aware, understated rather than overstated the reality. There were many cases in which they were considerably exceeded. It was quite true that the extravagant expenditure which distinguished some contests previous to the passing of the first Reform Bill was not now common. The restrictions and limitations that the law had thrown around elections had prevented that. It would be difficult for a wealthy man to ruin himself and permanently impair the fortunes of his family by a single contest now, as he could have done half a century ago. There was a time when £150,000 was thrown away over a contest in the City of York, and when from £80,000 to £90,000 was wasted in an election for the County of Northumberland. Such an expenditure could not take place now. But although the outlay in individual contests was lessening, the gross cost of a General Election was greater than it ever had been, and its disposition and tendency were to increase. Formerly, when a constituency was under the control of a patron, or a couple of patrons, they settled the terms of the contest without reference to the constituents. Even in large boroughs, contests were not so numerous in the past as they were now. He (Mr. Cowen) knew best the town he represented; and in Newcastle there was for 50 years prior to the passing of the Reform Bill no contested election. But in the 40 years immediately succeeding that Act, out of 16 elections there were 14 polls. The case of Newcastle fairly well represented that of the country generally. The position of the Septennial Act might be explained thus—The Pretender was at rest; the Papal faction that disturbed the dreams of their ancestors had ceased from troubling; and the heat and irritation of contested elections had cleared off; but the costs of contests had been increased. Three of the purposes of the Act have been accomplished, not by it, but through circumstances that it did not influence, and the last one it had failed to answer. Some arguments that were used in effect against the Act at the time it passed could not now be upheld to its detriment. He willingly confessed that. By the Revolution the House of Commons gained the influence in the direction of affairs that the Crown lost. The Government soon found that they could not coerce Members, but they could buy them. Sir Robert Walpole openly argued that the power and the means of Ministerial corruption were indispensable to Parliamentary government. Members bought their way into this House, and when there they sold their votes and influence to the Party that paid them best. A room at one time was open in connection with the Treasury, where Members regularly went, without shame, to receive remuneration for their services. Sometimes they got £100, sometimes £200, and at other times £300 for help they had given to the men in power. An entry in Sir Samuel Romilly's diary in 1807 throws a strange light over the traffic in seats, even at that comparatively late period. The distinguished Reformer said—

> "I shall procure myself a seat in the new Parliament. Tierney, who manages this business for the friends of the late Administration, assures me he can hear of no seats to be disposed of. After a Parliament which has lived little more than four months, one would naturally suppose that those seats which are regularly sold by the proprietors of them would be very cheap; they are, in fact, sold now at a higher price than was ever given for them before. Tierney tells me that he has offered £10,000 for the two seats at Westbury, the property of the late Lord Abingdon, and which are to be made the most of by the trustees for the creditors, and has met with a refusal. £6,000 and £5,500 have been given for seats, with no stipulation as to time, or against the event of a speedy dissolution by the King's death, or by any change of Administration."

No one would attempt to say that that condition of things existed in these days. Many hard things were said against the House of Commons now; but no one could, with justice, say that the votes of its Members were bought and sold. It might have intellectually degenerated; but, at least, it was honest. It might be sometimes disorderly, and not unfrequently too loquacious; but it could be affirmed, however, with satisfaction, that men of all Parties would spurn bribes by whomsoever they might be offered. In that respect the House of Commons to-day presented a marked and honourable contrast to the House of Commons even 60 years ago. The historical arguments in support of shortening the duration of Parliaments was interesting, as it recalled memorable political struggles. It was instructive, as it showed how stoutly their Constitutional rights were fought for, and how resolutely they were retained. But it was of less practical value than reasons that could be adduced from our changed social condition, and the different circumstances of our national life. The entire aspect of the country had altered since the days of the Pretender. Myriad-minded and million-handed enterprize had been busy in that period, weaving a new garment for humanity. The condition of existence had been changed, and the current of public affairs had been quickened. As his hon. Friend (Mr. Holms) had said, it took in 1714 12 days to travel between Edinburgh and London, and the journey could only be accomplished with difficulty and with discomfort. Now they could cover the same distance with ease and with security in less than as many hours. The lumbering stage-waggon had been succeeded by the high-flying coach, the coach had been displaced by the locomotive, and the locomotive itself had been supplanted in many instances by the telegraph. They could not only correspond, but converse by electricity. The poetic promise that Puck gave to Oberon—that he would put a girdle round the earth in 40 minutes—had been practically realized. The England of to-day was as different from, and superior to, the England of the days of Walpole as the England of that time was different from, and superior to, any semi-civilized country. A man's life was measured not by his years, but by his sensations, his sufferings, his experience, and his knowledge. And as with the life of a man, so should it be with the life of a Parliament. Now-a-days Parliaments not only attempted, but accomplished, ten times as much work in a year as they formerly aspired to perform. They had been assured that one year of Europe was worth 100 of Cathay. If that was so, surely three years or five years of a Parliament, worked as theirs was, must be worth seven years of such drowsy legislation as their forefathers had a century ago. The opponents of the Septennial Act resisted it mainly because of the dread they had of the illegitimate influence which the Court, the Crown, and the Cabinet could bring to bear on Members of Parliament. That, however, was past. The danger now lay in an entirely opposite direction. They had extended the suffrage, they had increased the constituencies, and they had invented (he thought very unwisely) a complicated and complex system of elections. Those changes had driven the supporters of all Parties in the State to systematic and minute organization. It had been thought, indeed, that they could only develop and apply their strength through such channels. They were, he (Mr. Cowen) feared, now running the risk of suffering from over organization. It was possible that their enlarged constituencies might disappear before cliques and caucuses, as had not unfrequently been the case in America. That had not taken place yet, and he knew no better means of preventing it than by making elections frequent. The best antidote to that excessive organization was to bring the Representatives and the represented into closer and more direct contact with each other. Shorter Parliaments would help to accomplish that. And if, along with such a change, the legitimate expenses of elections were thrown upon the constituents as they ought to be, and it was rendered illegal for candidates either to pay for canvassing, conveyances, or agency, the necessity for—and certainly the danger that would arise from—the organizing spirit of the time would be avoided. If there were more appeals to the constituencies, the political intelligence of the people would be quickened, a healthy independence of thought would be generated, and the breath of national life would be sweetened.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in the opinion of this House, the duration of any future Parliament should not exceed five years."—(*Mr. John Holms.*)

COLONEL ALEXANDER rose to move, as an Amendment—

"That, in the opinion of this House, the Septennial Act has been satisfactory in its operation, and ought not to be repealed."

The hon. and gallant Gentleman said, the hon. Member for Reading (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) said, last Session, that the present was the worst Parliament that had been elected since the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832. He (Colonel Alexander) was very glad to see, however, that the hon. Member for Hackney (Mr. Holms) did not, at least, share that opinion. That hon. Gentleman thought so well of this Parliament, that he was prepared to propose it should fix the duration of all future Parliaments. Moreover, although in his (Mr. Holms's) opinion the natural life of a Parliament should not exceed five years, he confidently submitted to a Parliament in its seventh year of existence the decision of this most important question. The hon. Member for Newcastle (Mr. Cowen) had maintained that the House of Commons which had passed the Septennial Act, having only been elected for three years, was not constitutionally competent to prolong its duration for seven years. But Lord Brougham, although himself an advocate of triennial Parliaments, had triumphantly disposed of this objection, and pointed out that the acceptance of such a doctrine would involve the validity of the Unions with Scotland and Ireland, and imply a denial of the supreme power of Parliament. Assuming then, as he thought he was entitled to do, that the Parliament of 1716 was legally competent to prolong its own existence, the question now before the House was whether the hon. Member for Hackney had succeeded in showing to its satisfaction that the Septennial Act, which had been in operation more than 160 years, ought now to be repealed? If he (Colonel Alexander) rightly understood the hon. Gentleman, the main objection he brought forward against the Act was this—that under its working Parliament might be seised of questions on which the electors had never been consulted. Unquestionably it might; but he would ask, why not? Lord Brougham, an authority who had been often cited, speaking on this point in 1818, said—

"He must take leave to observe that the supreme power necessarily vested somewhere, and that it was the constant practice of the Legislature to perform acts which the electors had never had in contemplation, but which they had confided full authority to their representatives to perform if necessary."

But even if they admitted the validity of the objection raised by the hon. Gentleman, he (Colonel Alexander) would ask, how would it be met by the substitution of quinquennial for septennial Parliaments? It was, after all, only a question of degree. A Parliament elected for five years might, equally with one of longer duration, be called upon to decide questions of the gravest importance as on which the opinion of constituencies had never been collected. Take, for instance, the Eastern Question, and supposing the present Parliament to have been quinquennial, a dissolution would have occurred immediately after the return of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury from Berlin, and who could doubt what would have been the result of a General Election under such circumstances? The hon. Gentleman was haunted by the dread of the dangers into which the uncontrolled power of the Government might lead the country when their majority in this House no longer represented the majority of the electors. But upon this point, he (Colonel Alexander) would commend to his attention a very apposite sentence from a speech of Lord Althorp's delivered in the year 1834. Lord Althorp said—

> "Gentlemen who found the decision of the House directly against their opinions were, no doubt, apt to think that the House decided against the opinion of the people at large."—[3 *Hansard*, xxiii. 1061.]

It struck him that those words of Lord Althorp, uttered in the year 1834, were not wholly inapplicable to the circumstances of the present day. The other day he read a letter from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich, in which he said—

> "The Government did not dissolve because they were afraid to submit their conduct to the verdict of the country;"

and almost immediately afterwards two of the largest constituencies in the Kingdom gave an emphatic denial to the assertion of the right hon. Gentleman. Had it not been for the remarks of the hon. Member for Newcastle, he need not have said so much about the early Parliaments of this country; although it had always been the custom in debates upon this subject to refer to the famous Statute of Edward III., which provided that Parliaments should be held at least "once a year, or oftener if need be." The fact was, there was no analogy; and, therefore, no comparison could be profitably instituted between those Parliaments which were summoned sometimes only for a few days, for the purpose of granting Supplies, and the Parliaments of the present day. In former days it was necessary to compel men to serve in Parliament, and our forefathers very unwillingly quitted their homes in Cornwall or Cumberland for the purpose of giving their attendance at Westminster Hall or elsewhere, even though the Sheriffs were empowered and ordered, in fact, to assess all reasonable expenses to the Knights "*veniendo morando et redeundo.*" It happened not unfrequently, in the days mentioned by the hon. Member for Newcastle, that the time occupied in passing to and fro between Cornwall and London was longer than that taken up by the actual Session of Parliament. Thus, in the ninth year of Edward III., Parliament sat for only eight days, while the Members for Cornwall were allowed travelling expenses for 32 days, or just four times that period. Then as to boroughs, so little at that time did they value the electoral privileges and their rights of returning Members, that some boroughs actually refused to make any return; whether by reason of inability or poverty, or because they had no fit persons to return or who would serve. In other boroughs they allowed their privileges to go by default; the Sheriff having to make the following report — "*Nullum mihi responsum dederunt.*" How, then, could the House compare, as the hon. Member for Newcastle had done, the Parliaments of those days with the Parliaments of the present? The fact was, as was pointed out by Mr. Lamb, afterwards Lord Melbourne, that this Statute of Edward III., mentioned by the hon. Member, was disregarded almost as soon as it was enacted, because towards the end of the reign of Edward III. no less than 21 years elapsed without the holding of any Parliament at all. The fact was that the complaint in the old days was not that Parliaments were not new, but that they were not frequent enough; and it was for that reason that in a famous Statute—namely, the 16th Charles I., to which allusion had already been made—it was provided that Parliament should not be intermitted above three years. The Preamble of that Statute ran—

> "Whereas by the Law and Statutes of this Realm, the Parliament ought to be holden at least once a year."—[*Statutes at large*, 16 Car. I., cap. 1.]

No mention whatever was made of elections. The word "chosen" was not used. What was meant was "frequent Parliaments," not "new Parliaments;" and, in point of fact, until the Triennial Act in the reign of William III., the duration of Parliament was limited only by the pleasure or by the death of the

Sovereign. He was quite aware that the hon. Member (Mr. J. Holms) did not propose to return to the triennial period; but, nevertheless, as he had extolled that period, thinking it would bear a favourable comparison with the septennial, and as the hon. Member for Newcastle had followed his example, and had pointed out all the corruption which had existed in the septennial period, perhaps the House would permit him (Colonel Alexander) to prove—which he hoped he would be able to do to its satisfaction —that the triennial period was not quite the virtuous period which the hon. Members for Hackney and Newcastle supposed, and that the evils complained of in the one were equally rife in the other. It was quite true, as the hon. Member for Newcastle had stated, and also as had been said by the hon. Member for Hackney, that the power of the House of Commons was largely increased in the reign of William III.; but he did not think that at that time that fact was a source of unmixed blessing, for although the House of Commons had been emancipated from the control of the Crown, no means had as yet been taken to insure its responsibility to the people. The triennial period lasted altogether about 22 years; and as Lord Macaulay had been quoted, perhaps the House would allow him to quote a few words from that authority, referring to a third of the period, beginning with 1698 and ending 1705. Lord Macaulay had said of that period—

> "No portion of our Parliamentary history is less pleasing or more instructive. It will be seen that the House of Commons became altogether ungovernable, abused its gigantic power with unjust and insolent caprice, browbeat the King and the Lords and the Courts of Common Law and the constituent bodies, violated rights guaranteed by the great Charter, and at length made itself so odious that the people were glad to take shelter under the protection of the Throne, and of the hereditary aristocracy from the tyranny of the Assembly which had been chosen by themselves."

Another writer, Tindal, told them, with regard to the Parliament that sat in 1701, that the French had a great Party in it; that the French pacquet boat always brought over 10,000 louis d'or and sometimes more; and that, instead of the old practice of treating and drinking and entertainment that was formerly adopted, the most scandalous practice came in of buying votes. Then, how infamous was the conduct of the House of Commons at the time of the trial of Lord Somers, when, pending the impeachment, the House prejudged the question, and carried an Address to His Majesty, "praying him to remove John Lord Somers from his Council and presence for ever." They would find that during the whole of the triennial period the conduct of the Upper formed a brilliant contrast to the conduct of the Lower House of Parliament. Early in the reign of Queen Anne, grants to the enormous sum of £100,000 a-year were voted in Committee of the House of Commons as a provision for Prince George of Denmark in case that Prince survived the Queen; and they were told by Lord Stanhope that the Bills embodying this lavish grant were adopted by the Commons with only a semblance of debate, although stoutly resisted in the House of Lords. Then the Bill for preventing occasional conformity, which imposed heavy penalties on Dissenters who took the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England as a qualification for office and afterwards attended conventicles, was twice carried by immense majorities in the Commons, and on both occasions rejected by the Lords. At the Dissolution in 1705, Burnet writes—

> "Thus this Session and with it this Parliament came to an end; it was no small blessing to the Queen and Nation that they got well out of such hands."

Go on to the next triennial period—1707. When a Committee of the Lords was appointed to examine the complaints made by the merchants against the Admiralty, they were told by Burnet that the Committee of the Lords called the merchants before them and treated them not with the scorn which had been very indecently offered them by some Members of the House of Commons, but with great patience and gentleness. In 1708, Parliament was dissolved on the presentation of the most fulsome Addresses to the Queen after the trial of Dr. Sacheverell. With a General Election held under such circumstances in 1710, it was not surprising that at the end of the first Session Burnet wrote—

> "All considering persons had a very melancholy prospect when they saw what might be apprehended from the two Sessions that were yet to come of the same Parliament."

That was the Parliament which sent Walpole to the Tower, and was adjourned no fewer than 11 times for the purpose of keeping him there. Of this period, Burnet wrote—

> "The scandal of corruption was now higher than ever, for it was believed men were not only bribed for a whole Session, but had new bribes for particular votes," and he added, "this is the worst Parliament I ever saw."

He (Colonel Alexander) thought it would be difficult to find a more conclusive proof of the great rise in importance of the House of Commons after the passing of the Septennial Act than the circumstance that whereas Harley and St. John caught eagerly at a seat in the Lords, Walpole and Pulteney reluctantly quitted the Commons. Archdeacon Coxe, in mentioning the refusal of a Peerage by Walpole in 1723, observed that—

> "Hitherto it had been customary for those who are entrusted with the chief direction of affairs to be placed in the House of Lords; but, conscious that his talents were best calculated for the House of Commons, and that his consequence would soon decline if called to the Upper House, Walpole waived the dignity for himself, but accepted it for his son."

But perhaps the most remarkable testimony in favour of the Septennial Act was that given by one of the most eminent of the Predecessors of the right hon. Gentleman at present occupying the Chair. They were told that Mr. Speaker Onslow was frequently heard to declare—

> "That the passing of the Septennial Act formed the era of the emancipation of the British House of Commons from its former dependence on the Crown and the House of Lords, and from that period it has risen in consequence and strength."

The very men who suggested the Triennial Act were so convinced of its failure that they earnestly advocated its repeal; and when the Septennial Act became law the venerable Somers observed to Townshend — "I have just heard of the work on which you are engaged, and congratulate you on it." The hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. J. Holms) had stated that the triennial period was glorious for our arms; but against Blenheim and a glorious war they might set the Treaty of Utrecht and a discreditable peace. Besides, what did hon. Gentlemen opposite care about successful wars? It was only the other day Lord Derby told people how much Blenheim cost them, and he spoke of that battle as "the gunpowder and glory business." He (Colonel Alexander) did not, of course, deny the corruption of the septennial period; but having shown that the same corruption prevailed during the triennial, he contended that corruption was altogether independent of the duration of Parliament. The Legislature was corrupt because "the people loved to have it so." The statesmen of the reign of George II., though conscious of the evil, failed to discern the remedy. They saw in the repeal of the Septennial Act a panacea for every evil. To Lord Chatham in the succeeding reign belonged the credit of first suggesting what eventually proved to be the only true mode of reforming Parliament. Speaking in 1766 of the borough representation, he called it "the rotten part of our Constitution," and said—"It cannot continue a century, if it does not drop it must be amputated." His son, Mr. Pitt, also saw what was the true remedy for the evil. He said—

> "There were boroughs which had now, in fact, no actual existence but in the return of Members to that House. They had no existence in property, population, in trade and weight. There were hardly men in the borough who had a right to vote, and they were the slaves and subjects of a person who claimed the property of the borough and who, in fact, made the return."

The hon. Member for Hackney had quoted a great many eminent statesmen —Lord Macaulay and others—who were in favour of triennial periods; but against that, he (Colonel Alexander) would quote others who were as decidedly against the proposition. Mr. Pitt, it was true, languidly supported the annual Motion of Alderman Sawbridge for shortening the duration of Parliaments; but it was clear that his faith in the remedy was not very robust, for it found no place in his Reform Bill of 1785. When Mr. Grey, afterwards Lord Grey, in 1797, brought in his Reform Bill, he made one brief and almost contemptuous reference to this subject in a few words at the close of his speech—

> "If the reform in the representation was adopted, but not otherwise, it occurred to him that the duration of Parliament should be limited to three years."

But in the Bill of 1831 the proposal was not included. Lord John Russell, in introducing the Bill, said that—

> "It was not the intention of His Majesty's Government to originate any proposal on the subject of the duration of Parliament."

And in the many speeches on the subject of Reform made by Lord John Russell between 1820 and 1830 there occurred no allusion whatever to shortening the duration of Parliaments. When Mr. O'Connell, in 1830, moved Resolutions advocating triennial Parliaments, Lord John Russell moved a counter Resolution entirely negativing the proposal. When, in 1834, Mr. Tennyson brought forward his Motion to shorten the duration of Parliament, Lord Althorp made use of very remarkable language. He said—

> "He had voted formerly for the repeal of the Septennial Act during the continuance of an unreformed Parliament, because he never then entertained the least hope of carrying the great measure of Parliamentary reform, and knowing that so large a portion of the then Members of that House were sent there on the nomination of individuals, he thought it desirable that the power of the people over them, whom they actually did elect, should be increased to the greatest possible extent."

And in the same speech there was a sentence which was very applicable to some remarks recently made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich—

> "One reason why the duration of Parliaments had been shorter than the law permitted, had been that the Governments had taken advantage of the period when it was most convenient to dissolve the House of Commons with the greatest prospect of advantage to themselves."

The fact was that Lord Grey, Lord Althorp, and Lord John Russell saw that shortening the duration of Parliament without reform would be useless, and with other reforms would be unnecessary. When they were told that at an election in Bute, within living memory, only one person attended the meeting, that he took the chair, called over the roll of freeholders, answered to his own name, moved and seconded his own nomination, put the question to the vote, and was unanimously returned; what did it matter whether a gentleman so returned elected himself for seven, or, for the matter of that, seventeen years? He was entitled to ask the hon. Gentleman the Member for Hackney—Who asked for this measure? Had he been able to evoke any enthusiasm in favour of it? He dangled it before the House and the country during the whole of last Session, and presented, he (Colonel Alexander) thought, some three or four Petitions, with about as many, or, at any rate, not many more, signatures attached to them. The hon. Gentleman in that respect trod in the footsteps of his Predecessor, Mr. Tennyson, whose Motion in favour of shortening the duration of Parliament was so feebly supported out-of-doors that the late Lord Derby, then Mr. Stanley, contrasted the small number of Petitions in its favour with the enormous number presented in favour of the abolition of the Slave Trade, a circumstance which so discouraged Mr. Tennyson that he allowed many years to elapse before he attempted to renew his proposal. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Hackney, in a very interesting article, had said last year that the question of the duration of Parliaments had not been prominently before the country during the present century. He (Colonel Alexander) would go further, and say that the utmost apathy had been shown by the country on the question. The hon. Gentleman had adduced the example of foreign Legislatures; but he (Colonel Alexander) did not think that they need go to foreign countries to ascertain how they were to legislate on such a question. He knew the hon. Gentleman was a great admirer of the German military system; but he was not aware that he was also an admirer of the German legislative system. He had spoken in favour of quinquennial Parliaments; but he (Colonel Alexander) desired to point out that they had had no experience of them. If the theory of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich (Mr. Gladstone) were adopted, that no Parliament was ever to have a last Session, the quinquennial Parliament of the hon. Member for Hackney would become nominally quadrennial, and practically triennial. Lord John Russell had on two occasions spoken of quinquennial Parliaments, and he spoke of them at an interval of 16 years, during which time he had considerably modified his views on the subject. Speaking in 1833, Lord John Russell said that—

> "If he had to frame an abstract Constitution . . . . he should certainly prefer the term of five to that of seven years. Living, however, as he

did, under a Constitution which was already formed, he did not see any advantage likely to result from altering the duration of Parliaments . . . . equal to the inconvenience of making the change."—[3 *Hansard*, xix. 1127.]

That was the opinion of Lord John Russell on quinquennial Parliaments in 1833. Sixteen years later, the same noble Lord withdrew his modified approval of quinquennial Parliaments. In 1849, he said—

> "My right hon. Friend (Mr. Tennyson) asks me whether I am now prepared to state that I think seven years the best term for which Parliament should endure? After the experience we have had for the good many years which have elapsed since the passing of the Reform Bill, I am prepared to state my decided opinion that we had better not alter the present term for which Parliament now endures."—[3 *Hansard*, cv. 865.]

He (Colonel Alexander) commended the attention of the House and that of hon. Gentlemen on the other side to the "decided opinion" of this distinguished veteran Reformer, and repeated that they had no experience of quinquennial Parliaments. The adoption of the proposal would be simply change for the mere sake of change. They had heard what the hon. Member for Newcastle had said of annual Parliaments. They might establish quinquennial Parliaments; but that would not settle the question. Lord Brougham told them that Mr. Burke once observed to him in jest—

> "I see you have got to universal suffrage and annual Parliaments; but you will still be beat by the oftener if need be-ans,"—[1 *Hansard*, xxxviii. 1166.]

alluding to the words "once a-year, or oftener, if need be," in the Statute of Edward III.

> "The oftener if need be-ans would still start up and carry the day. Their existence was eternal; there was no pitch too high, no base note too low for them. They knew of no obstacle, hardly any difficulty; their only rule in the comparison was to go beyond the last man who had offered."

He asked the House to reject the Motion, which, in his humble opinion, was both unnecessary and harmful. It was unnecessary, because the country, whenever it desired a Dissolution, had ample means at its disposal for giving an expression to its wish; it was unnecessary, because, in the words of Lord John Russell, the change would make Members of Parliament dependent, not on the settled opinion of the people, but on their transient and temporary impulses. Let the House say, and say decisively—"*Hic statui signum — hic optime manebimus.*" The hon. and gallant Gentleman concluded by moving his Amendment.

Sir GEORGE BOWYER said, he had great pleasure in seconding the Amendment. There was no magic in the precise number of years a Parliament endured. In ancient times Parliament was called together for the nonce, and for every Parliament there was a fresh Election. That, however, was not the case at the present day, and that House did substantially represent the opinions of the body of the people, although its term lasted seven years instead of one. The desideratum was to get a Parliament whose duration should be sufficiently long without being too short. Its duration should be sufficiently long to enable Members to learn their business and to gain experience, without which they would be of no use, and not so long as to enable them to forget that they were not independent legislators, but Members of a Representative Assembly. It was said that under a septennial system Members were of little good during the last two years, because they were talking to their constituents rather than endeavouring to transact the business of the country. But the same thing would happen under a quinquennial, a triennial, or an annual system, and the useful years of a Parliament would be proportionately shortened. Moreover, it was contended that no Parliament should be suffered to run out its full term; and, therefore, the five years' Parliament would become a four years' Parliament, and a three years' a two years' Parliament. He thought that the present Government were acting well within their right in refusing to dissolve Parliament before the expiration of its full term; and if they were wrong in that respect they would be answerable to the next Parliament. Again, if this demand for a five years' Parliament were complied with, an agitation would be got up for a three years', for a two years', and, ultimately, for an annual Parliament. If Parliaments only endured for very short periods, the result would be that the House would be filled with a number of adventurers, whose only object would be to get into some office or otherwise enrich themselves at the expense of their country, while lawyers would refuse to imperil their professional prospects by coming into that House for a year or two only. The shortening of Parliaments would necessitate great expense, and the ablest men in the country would hesitate before expending large sums of money in order to procure seats which in all probability they would not retain except for short periods of time. The main results, as far as he could see, of shortening the duration of Parliaments would be to bring into the House a large number of agitators whose only object was to appeal to the passions of the mob. As far as he was concerned, he would prefer to see the duration of Parliaments doubled instead of shortened, feeling assured as he did that such a course would increase the independence of Members and insure their taking a wider course than they would do if they were in continual fear of incurring the displeasure of constituents less wise than themselves.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

SIR GEORGE BOWYER said, the tendency of the present time was in the direction of democracy, not only abroad, but in this country; and he strongly urged as a means of stemming the tide which was setting in that direction that the House should pause before acceding to any proposal which could have the effect of shortening the duration of Parliaments.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "House" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "the Septennial Act has been satisfactory in its operation, and ought not to be repealed,"—(*Colonel Alexander*,)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. H. SAMUELSON said, that the hon. and learned Baronet who had just spoken had simply indulged in a hypothetical harangue. He (Mr. H. Samuelson) did not think any results so terrible as those anticipated by the hon. and learned Baronet were likely to flow from adopting the proposal of the hon. Member for Hackney. It was not, in his view, logical to suggest that adventurers and men who sought their own interests only would be induced to seek seats in Parliament by the passing of a law which would probably shorten their Parliamentary life. If men who aspired to Parliamentary careers sought simply to make hay during the shining of the sun, they would have larger opportunities for doing this in a possible seven years' Parliament than they could have in one which could only last for five, three, or, perhaps, one year only. The last Parliament only lasted five years; and no one, he thought, would be found to say that there was not a great deal of good legislation during the life of that Parliament. Then it was urged that Parliament ought to last long enough to teach hon. Members their business; but he believed that 100 years would not be long enough to teach some people. Parliament was supposed to represent the opinion of the country; but it was not only possible, but probable, that within seven years the opinion of the country would change, and how could that fact be ascertained but by an appeal to the country? The last Government was strong when it came into power; but it was found at the end of five years that it had lost all its strength, and that the mind of the country had undergone a change. If a Government desired to retain strength, he thought it could best do so by submitting its conduct and its measures at the end of each five years to the judgment of the people of the country. He had heard no valid argument against the proposal of his hon. Friend; and if an additional reason were wanted for his support of the Motion it might be found in the fact that he believed it would, if carried into effect, lessen the expenses of elections, which were, in many cases, so great as to be positively scandalous.

MR. HANBURY, who had the following Amendment on the Paper:—

"That, in the opinion of this House, the Septennial Act provides a sound expression of the matured wishes of the nation, and no occasion exists for its repeal,"

said, he had not heard from any supporter of the Motion a single argument in favour of a quinquennial Parliament which did not equally apply to a triennial Parliament. The Motion he regarded as a mere caprice of political speculation. They had no experience in this country, and no great principle to appeal to. The only principle he recognized in the Motion was the somewhat unstatesmanlike principle of splitting the difference between triennial and septennial Parliaments. The hon. Member for Newcastle (Mr. J. Cowen), in his eloquent speech, did not conceal his real wishes on this subject; for the whole of that speech was in favour, not of the Motion, but of annual Parliaments. In his opinion, it was quite by accident that the hon. Member for Hackney had fixed upon five years for the duration of Parliament, because the hon. Member not only made an able speech, but he had written an article—always a dangerous thing to do—upon the subject. That article appeared in *The Nineteenth Century* in January last year; but it so happened that that was a time when the Government had reached the end of their fifth year, and it was a period also when many people who had at one time lost their head were barely beginning to recover their sober senses. Of course, it was natural for the hon. Member for Hackney, if he believed that the people were influenced by what had been told them of the foreign policy of the country, to think that a system of quinquennial Parliaments would have at that time given the Liberal Party an admirable chance. In considering the proposition of the hon. Member, they should narrowly examine the charges which he brought against the present Parliament. The hon. Member said that it failed to represent the opinions of the constituencies, and pointed out that great changes had taken place in the foreign policy of the country since the Parliament began to sit in 1874. He believed that both these allegations were unfounded. With regard to the first, it was unfortunate for the hon. Member that since he placed his Motion upon the Paper they had had some test elections, which had shown, if anything could, that Parliament was not out of harmony with the electors. It had been declared that test elections were of no real value, but he would remind the House that it had been in consequence of test elections that Parliament had been dissolved in 1874 in a most sudden manner; and if those elections were not to be taken as an expression of opinion outside the House, then he would say that Parliament had never been dissolved in a more arbitrary manner than had been the case on that occasion. Then the hon. Member spoke of a great change in the foreign policy of the Government. Should it not be remembered that the war that took place in South Africa was in distinct opposition to the wishes of the Government, and that it would have taken place whatever might have been the legal duration of Parliament? In everything that the Government had done they had carried out the policy approved by the people, who would have unanimously adopted the policy of maintaining the Ottoman Empire in 1874 if they had then been asked whether they would do so. But if the Government had really been in the wrong the remedy proposed by the hon. Member would really be no remedy at all, for the occurrences for which he blamed the Government took place in 1878, within three years of a dissolution; and how could he show that a Government was more likely to act under the control of the constituencies when there were only three years to run in a five years' Parliament than when there were only three years to run in a septennial Parliament? The hon. Member had given them some facts which, in his opinion, altogether upset the hon. Member's theory. He had told them that, since 1833, the average duration of Parliaments had been a little less than four years. Now, what did that show? Why, that when Governments under the present system had not been in harmony with the country they had dissolved. It was only when a Government was supported by Parliament, and Parliament by the country, that Parliament was allowed to last seven years. The hon. Member, therefore, would not allow a Parliament to run on for seven years, even though it had the support of the people, but would put the country to the trouble of a General Election when an election was not required. Was it possible for the nation to have a greater control over Parliament than could be exercised at the present day, when there were such multifarious means of communication by which hon. Members were brought into association with their constituencies? Ancient history had been quoted to a considerable extent in support of the Motion, but quotations of the kind were totally irrelevant, because the times were so much altered. Popular opinion acted upon the House in a far greater degree than formerly, owing to increased representation. The abolition of pocket boroughs also removed the need which might have been said to exist once for more frequent elections. It might have been wise in old days, when corruption was prevalent, to shorten Parliaments in order that Ministers might not exercise too great a control over Members; but they had been told, in the eloquent speech of the hon. Member for Newcastle, that there was no danger of such control being exercised at the present day. Thus one great reason for diminishing the length of Parliaments had really ceased to exist. It might be said that, under the present system, the influence of the constituencies over Parliament was indirect. Well, he hoped that it might ever continue to be indirect; for that indirect influence rested upon what had always been at the basis of our Constitution—namely, the principle that confidence must be placed somewhere. He believed it would be an evil epoch for England when they became so democratic that the people would not trust those who represented them, and when they scrutinized their acts more as if they were delegates than as if they were Representatives. The hon. Member for Hackney had quoted foreign precedents; but there were no foreign precedents for a quinquennial Parliament. Again, there was an essential difference between our Parliament and any Parliament abroad. In this country there existed a condition of public integrity which in some countries of the world was not so conspicuous as it might be; and in few countries was the control of Parliament over the Executive so great as in England. The House of Commons had to deal with subjects of greater importance and variety than had ever been dealt with by any Parliament which had ever sat; and it was, therefore, most important that they should have in their Assembly men whom the people could trust, who would bring to the consideration of public affairs a sense of justice and independent opinion, and who would not be easily led by popular clamour. Public opinion was apt to be influenced by tides and floods of sentiment; and he held that it would be a bad thing for this country if the Representatives of the nation, renouncing their independence, were to allow themselves, in all cases, to be ruled by that opinion. There was nothing to gain by substituting this direct control for the indirect Constitutional control which now existed; the control might be greater, indeed, but we might buy it at a perilous price. It was admitted that a more honest House of Commons never sat; and yet, at a time when popular control was greater than ever it was before, it was proposed to shorten Parliaments, on the ground that that control was not sufficient—that, in short, the Members could not be trusted. To do that would be to bring discredit on public life—to bring it down to its level in America, where the majority of thinking and independent men refused to have anything to do with politics. In this country we had to deal with affairs of the greatest importance. If the work was to be done thoroughly it must be done by men who felt their responsibility; but could we obtain men who would appreciate the responsibility if Parliaments lasted only two or three years, and if we had constant appeals to the country rendering it impossible that it could have any permanent policy? That would not only diminish the responsibility of Ministers, but it would discredit the House itself. It would be destroying the substance for the sake of the shadow. While it would nominally give fresh power to the constituencies, it would destroy the prestige and influence of the House, through which the people defended their rights. The people would have increased control, but over what kind of a Parliament? Over one very much sunk in the popular estimation. At present men were too much inclined to get into Parliament by giving reckless pledges—too many had been given lately. With quinquennial Parliaments there would be practically a Dissolution every four years; at any rate, constituencies would know more certainly than now that an election was impending, and, therefore, there would be a greater chance of their exacting these pledges. If we had not that evil, we must have another—the mischief of a snap Dissolution like the last. At times we should have triennial Dissolutions, with all the results of triennial Parliaments. At present Members had to resign their seats when they took office, and submit to a new election; and we should have

Ministers elected twice in three years, or four times in six years; and what men were likely to undergo such an amount of trouble and expense? It was a serious question whether we had not too many elections now. If we increased the number, we should be likely to increase the number—already too large—of electors who abstained from voting, and the best men would go through the turmoil of an election every three years. It was essential that we should have men trained and experienced in political life; but with shorter Parliaments we should have a constant succession of inexperienced men, who would take two out of their first three years to learn the Business of Parliament. What would be the effect of these changes on our foreign policy? Having to face a great Power like Russia, it was important, if we were to maintain our position among the nations of the world, that we should have a firm national purpose; but he contended that this was impossible with triennial Parliaments. The result of these constant appeals to popular opinion would be that it would be worked upon by irresponsible agitators. That would furnish the best argument to despotic Powers against a Government like ours, based on popular control. It would be said it was impossible for a great nation to combine our institutions with a firm and consistent national purpose. The domestic Business of Parliament was so enormous, it was almost impossible to deal with it, and it was growing every day; and how should we get through it with fresh and inexperienced men? At present there was a great deal of talk, much of which was deemed irrelevant by some of them; and one result of the lowered suffrage was that more men were sent in whose constituents expected them to talk. With growing work, increased talking, and shorter Parliaments, it would be almost impossible to transact the Business of the country. It was also important to consider the relation of that House to the other Estates of the Realm. Although the intention of the hon. Member for Hackney was to increase the influence of the House of Commons by bringing it more under the control of the constituencies, the result would be the increased authority of the Crown and of the House of Lords, and the greater influence and power of the permanent officials. He should heartily support the Amendment, because it would maintain the prestige of Parliament, and defend the Commons against the Crown and the House of Lords on the one hand; and, on the other, against the more serious dangers of bureaucracy, arising from the concentration of power in the hands of the permanent officials of the country.

Mr. J. HOLMS, in reply, said, most of the hon. Members who had spoken against the Motion had dealt with the question as if he had argued in favour of triennial or annual Parliaments, whereas he entirely avoided doing anything of the kind. He still held to the views which he had so fully stated to the House—that quinquennial Parliaments would be of vast service to the country.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 60; Noes 110: Majority 50.—(Div. List, No. 22.)

Words *added*.

Main Question, as amended, put.

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this House, the Septennial Act has been satisfactory in its operation, and ought not to be repealed.

MERCHANT SHIPS LADEN IN BULK.

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Viscount SANDON, in rising to move the appointment of a

> "Select Committee to make inquiry concerning the recent foundering of Ships laden with grain, coal, and other heavy or bulk cargoes; and to ascertain whether such founderings are due to excessive cargoes or to defective dimensions or construction, or to the employment of vessels unsuited for the trades or voyages in which the Ships were employed, or to any other and what cause; and to report whether any change in the Law affecting Merchant Shipping is required to prevent the recurrence of such losses,"

said, he need hardly assure the House that this subject had of late very much occupied the attention of the Board of Trade, and need scarcely say that any question affecting the lives of our sailors was one of interest to every hon. Member of the House, on whatever side he might sit, or whatever might be his politics. He was quite aware of the great interest which the question excited in the country, and fully recognized the duty of diminishing as far as possible every danger to the brave men who navigated the ocean under the British flag. He was quite sure that the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) was the last man who would wish to claim for himself any exclusive rights or feelings of humanity in this matter. They all wished that the lives of our sailors in their very hazardous calling should be as safe as possible. They all admitted that some inquiry was greatly called for into the terrible loss of cargo vessels from foundering during the last two or three years. For some months past he had been aware that many gallant ships had been lost in the Atlantic and Bay of Biscay, without, he regretted to say, any record of how the loss occurred. With these facts before him, some months before the matter had been taken up by the hon. Member for Derby, he (Viscount Sandon) had consulted the best authorities on the subject, and he made up his mind that as soon as Parliament met he would announce that it would be necessary that a Royal Commission or a Select Committee of the House should be appointed to inquire into the loss of those ships. These losses, it should be remembered, had not been confined to grain ships, but had been very remarkable in the case of cargo ships generally during the last three or four years. He was well aware that the loss had been heavy in the grain trade; but it had extended very much to heavy cargo ships, and he made up his mind to wait until Parliament met, so that he might have an opportunity of consulting hon. Members on both sides connected with shipping, as to whether it would be better to have a Royal Commission or a Select Committee of that House. His own impression was that it would be better to have a small Commission of five or seven Members, who would go very carefully into the inquiry, as experts; and as soon as Parliament met he put himself into communication with an hon. Member on the Opposition Benches to know if he would take the Chair, and he resolved to ask the hon. Member for Derby to take a seat on the Commission. After consulting, however, more and more with hon. Members acquainted with shipping, he came to the conclusion that it would be better to have a Select Committee for the sake of speed, as it would be desirable to get a good judgment on the matter as soon as possible, so that if legislation were needed we might have it during this Session. He was aware it was possible for the hon. Member for Derby to say—"Why not pass my Bill at once, and secure human life by forbidding grain to be carried in bulk, and after that have your inquiry as to the security of the cargo trade generally?" His answer to that was that, with the evidence he had before him, no Government or responsible Department would venture to support the Bill of the hon. Member without inquiry. If they found a certain amount of evidence which made it extremely doubtful that the proposal of the hon. Member would promote the safety of human life, they were bound to pause before passing the Bill. It remained for him now to show that there was an amount of evidence from responsible persons which would lead a man to believe that it was a very moot question with men well acquainted with shipping whether, if they passed the hon. Member's Bill, they might not increase the danger to human life. Having made very careful inquiry on the subject from those best qualified to judge, not only shipowners, but men who had to risk their lives navigating ships—officers and men—there was a very grave doubt in his mind on the matter. The Chamber of Shipping of the United Kingdom was one of the most representative Bodies in this country. Almost every large port was now represented by its leading men in this Chamber of Shipping. He would ask the House to listen to the opinion of its Chairman, Mr. Glover, a man of very high standing and position. Mr. Glover said, in his inaugural address—

> "I should point out that, so far from putting all wheat and maize into bags lessening losses in the American trade, it is certain the main cause of such losses would be aggravated thereby. It is well known that want of stability, rather than cargo shifting, has led to many of the recent disasters. So much weight of cargo is above the centre of gravity that the ships, in nautical phrase, 'turn turtle.' Grain in bulk occupies less space than grain in bags; consequently, with the same number of tons of weight on board, the vessel entirely laden with bags would have more weight above her centre than if she had grain in bulk below, with the adequate quantity of bags above, according to the Canadian practice, and, therefore, would be more tender—in other words, have less stability—and would more easily turn over. It would be deeply to be regretted if an effort to lessen loss increased the very cause from which most of the recent losses have happened."

Such an opinion as that would of itself make any Government or House of Commons hesitate before passing the second reading of such a Bill as that of the hon. Member for Derby without very careful inquiry. What was the opinion of the Mercantile Marine Service Association, Liverpool?—an association which was deeply interested in the matter, as being composed of masters and officers, not of owners. They wrote to him officially to say that—

> "Mr. Plimsoll, M.P., in his well-meaning efforts to obtain the legislative prohibition contained in his Bill, should understand that the evils he seeks to prevent or diminish would be thereby increased. If the faulty design and formation of so many double-bottomed ships is not carefully investigated and checked, and which they are persuaded lie at the root of the whole difficulty, these losses will continue."

His point, therefore, was that to enforce merely the carrying of grain in bags instead of in bulk would increase the danger to human life. From Glasgow, Messrs. Allan, one of the leading firms, wrote—

> "The question is most important, involving vital interests, and is not to be measured by the mere cost of bagging grain. Bulk grain is heavier than bagged, and serves to keep the centre of gravity of a laden ship low."

A ship was safer, therefore, because she was kept stiff, when she carried grain in bulk than when she carried it in bags. But he wished the House to understand that he was expressing no personal opinion on the question; he only wished to appeal to the sense and judgment of the House, and to beg them to consider the whole matter carefully before taking any decisive action, as it was felt to be one of the greatest doubt and difficulty by practical men. He had carefully watched this matter for some time, and he would wish to state what the Chamber of Shipping—the opinion of whose chairman he had already quoted—had done when they came to a vote on the question. After a long discussion, the proposal in favour of carrying in bags rather than in bulk was put aside, and the carrying of grain all in bags was disapproved. They then passed this resolution, that—

> "The Executive Council take into consideration the question of carrying grain cargoes with the greatest amount of safety, and take such steps as they deem necessary."

Members of the Shipmasters' Society of London had also expressed opinions on the subject, and there was amongst them a grave difference of views. The chairman attributed losses very much to the build of the ships. Within the last three or four years, he said, a great change had taken place in the ships themselves. They were unstable. He added that he believed the real question at issue was not the carrying of grain in bags or in bulk, but whether the modern system of having a water-ballast tank and a double bottom was not the real cause of these disasters. No doubt there was great difference of opinion on the matter. He was not saying that the hon. Member for Derby was wrong; his point was that the subject was of such extreme importance that it demanded the most careful consideration of Parliament before any Bill was passed with respect to it. Again, the Shipmasters' and Officers' Protection Association of Scotland had sent him (Viscount Sandon) a copy of a Petition addressed by them to the House. These were not the shipowners, but consisting, as the Association did, entirely of masters and mates, comprised the very people who were most interested primarily in the saving of life. This Association represented Leith, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Greenock, Dundee, Aberdeen, and a number of other ports in Scotland. They begged the House to have an inquiry, to go into the modes of construction and loading for the trades in which these vessels were engaged. They lamented deeply the losses which had taken place; but they particularly lamented the use of water-ballast tanks, and of vessels with what were known as double bottoms. According to these witnesses, 92 per cent of vessels which had lately foundered at sea with grain cargoes had been double-bottomed vessels, and a large number of vessels of this class had foundered at sea while loaded with homogeneous cargoes, and in the proportion of three with such cargoes to one with grain or seed cargoes. These, surely, were important matters demanding very grave consideration. Other testimony came from Ireland. The Limerick Chamber of Commerce had communicated to him the result of a meeting held at Limerick a few days ago, at which they had resolved that the Bill of the hon. Member for Derby would be injurious to the importers of foreign grain, while the freedom of foreign ships from the like restrictions would be detrimental to the shipowners of the United Kingdom. All these facts showed that the matter required deep consideration. Again, he had received an important deputation from the Shipowners' Association of Liverpool, who hoped the House would hold its hand before it advised them to adopt the expensive system of carrying grain in bags. They stated that their vessels had been one of the chief mediums for carrying grain, and that no losses of any extent had been incurred through carrying it in bulk. The steamship owners had spoken in the same tone, remarking that they carried a greater amount of grain than any other body in the United Kingdom, and they had asked that the burden should not be put upon them unless it was undoubtedly necessary for the security of human life. He had also a letter from Mr. C. Mac Iver, one of the patriarchs of the shipping interest, who feared that the change proposed might have the effect of diverting the grain trade from British to foreign bottoms. Now, he did not say that the hon. Member for Derby was wrong, possibly the hon. Member might prove to be in the right, even in the face of such strong testimony; but, in any case, he hoped he would admit that the House was bound to investigate the subject. Let them not, in their zeal to save human life, do that which might increase the loss of life and endanger the enormous interest engaged in the grain-carrying trade. It was no trifling matter to interfere with the course of so great a trade. The rapidity of the movement of grain was one of the great elements of its cheapness, and at present it was rapidly transferred from one ship to another. It was clear, therefore, that the introduction of an intermediate process, such as that of putting it in sacks, would infallibly increase the time and cost of loading. If the proposed process did not, after all, turn out to be necessary, he trusted that the House would not rashly interfere with the existing conditions of the trade. There was one point to which it was specially necessary for him to allude, because on it the hon. Member for Derby had based his Bill—he meant the 16 ships which the hon. Member had stated had been lost during a recent period through improper loading of grain. Now, he had analyzed the loss of those 16 ships, and he found that two of them—the *Bernina* and the *Homer*—were not grain ships, but were laden with general cargo; and that two others—the *Zanzibar* and the *Surbiton*—carried mixed cargoes. The remaining 12 were wholly laden with grain, and of them one was stranded, and was not lost on account of grain-loading; another was sunk by a collision; another came to grief through the machinery breaking down; and another, the *Burgos*, foundered off the coast of Newfoundland. That reduced the number to be dealt with to eight. Of these eight cases, inquiries had already been held into the loss of the *Heimdall*, *Alphonso*, *Tiara*, and *Emblethorpe*. In the case of the *Alphonso*, the Court attributed the casualty to the giving way of a false bulkhead which had been erected to enable the ship to carry a grain cargo. In the case of the *Heimdall*, the Court found that the casualty was due to want of experience on the part of the master with respect to the stowage of grain and the fitting of shifting boards. The Court of Inquiry found that the *Tiara* was not a vessel of sufficient stability to carry a grain cargo, especially during the winter months, in the Bay of Biscay. The Court were of opinion that the loss of the *Emblethorpe* was due to instability from the form of the vessel. Inquiries were pending in the cases of the *Joseph Pease* and the *Telford*. That, the House would see, would reduce the whole of the 16 cases to a very small number, and proved that the losses were not to be attributed to the stowage of grain in bulk. Twelve vessels had been lost in the last three months, of which seven were grain and five were coal vessels; and this went to show that it was highly probable that their loss was owing, not to improper stowage of grain, but to some fault in the construction of the ships. He hoped the House would not be led astray by the evidence as to the extraordinary smallness of the cost of loading in bags which was given by persons representing the sack interest. All had rushed forward to say that they would be ready to meet all the requirements of the grain trade if the House should resolve that it was necessary to carry grain in sacks. With regard to the question itself, he wished to impress on the House that it was a matter for the fullest and calmest consideration. As far as he had seen, those who were the most conversant with the subject attributed the loss of these vessels to water-ballast tanks, to double bottoms, and to changes in the build of the ships, and every shipping man had told him inquiry was urgently needed in this matter. The House expressed no opinion whatever upon the Bill of the hon. Member for Derby; but as men of business they were bound to take the widest interests of the country into view. They were bound to see that an inquiry by careful, sober, and serious-minded men should be made into this question before they submitted themselves to the doctrine of the hon. Member for Derby. He trusted, therefore, that he should have the support of the hon. Member for Derby in moving the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the cause of those losses which they all deplored, and that he should have the hon. Member's support in securing that examination; and if legislation were necessary they might have wise and sensible legislation even before this Parliament came to an end. The noble Lord concluded by moving for the appointment of the Select Committee of which he had given Notice.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to make inquiry concerning the recent foundering of Ships laden with grain, coal, and other heavy or bulk cargoes; and to ascertain whether such founderings are due to excessive cargoes or to defective dimensions or construction, or to the employment of vessels unsuited for the trades or voyages in which the Ships are employed, or to any other and what cause; and to report whether any change in the Law affecting Merchant Shipping is required to prevent the recurrence of such losses."—(*Viscount Sandon.*)

Mr. PLIMSOLL said, he had to thank the noble Lord the President of the Board of Trade very heartily for the course which he had taken, and for the promptitude he had shown in taking it. He had also to say that he agreed in very much that the noble Lord had said. He thought the noble Lord had placed the case very fairly before the House; but he believed him to be misinformed on one or two very important particulars. When the noble Lord gave the reasons of several bodies of shipowners against the principle of the Bill he (Mr. Plimsoll) was amazed at their feebleness. He differed from the opinion of Mr. Glover and the two other authorities cited by the noble Lord, that because grain in bulk was heavier than grain in sacks, they would, therefore, raise the centre of gravity higher by loading in sacks. They said that if they put grain in sacks which would occupy 10 per cent more space than if the grain were not in sacks, they would raise the centre of gravity of the ship higher. But those who shipped grain in bulk knew very great effort was made to fill up the holds quite close up to the underside deck plank. Therefore, how could it be possible to put the centre any higher if they had got it as high as they could? It must be obvious to anyone that the centre of gravity remained precisely the same in both cases. The only real difference was that 10 per cent more would be put under deck in the one case than the other, and, in his opinion, the lightening of the ship to that extent would often make all the difference between safety and peril. The noble Lord referred to a Petition which had been sent to him, praying that instead of passing his (Mr. Plimsoll's) Bill the House would order the whole subject to be inquired into. But he considered there was no competition between the proposal of the noble Lord and his Bill. If there were any competition, he would admit that the mode of dealing with the difficulty as proposed by the President of the Board of Trade was incomparably the best. But they were not in competition; one supplemented the other. He was aware that other things besides grain imperilled the safety of ships, and often great danger arose from the shape of the ships. These were subjects that, of course, demanded inquiry; but they had the ships, and they must be dealt with, and with regard to the proposed alteration in the form of ships to enable them to carry grain in bulk, it must be remembered that, although it was possible to lengthen them, it was impossible to increase their depth or width so as to render them safe for carrying grain in bulk. The question was, could ships be rendered safer by enforcing the rule that grain should be carried in bags instead of in bulk? The noble Lord had stated facts with regard to certain ships which he (Mr. Plimsoll) confessed had startled him. He was surprised to hear that the four first-named ships were not grain-laden when they were lost, and he should have to make some further inquiry with reference to them. But the *Alphonso* was damaged, as the inquiry of the Board of Trade showed, by a bulkhead being injured. If the grain had been in bags, would this have happened? In another case, the loss occurred through the master being ignorant how to stow grain in bulk; but if it had been in bags the master would have been at no need to acquire such knowledge in addition to his other qualifications. In another case, it was said that the ship did not carry grain, but cotton seed; but that was grain according to the Act of 1876. He should be glad to second the noble Lord's Motion, and hoped that the Committee asked for by the noble Lord would be appointed, and that its inquiries would be proceeded with as rapidly as possible; but, at the same time, he asked whether it was possible for that Committee to report in time for efficient legislation on the subject this Session? He would, therefore, urge the passing of his Bill, for it would be advantageous rather than otherwise to the efforts of the Committee for them to have the practical results of one year's working of his Act before them, so that they could consider whether it was a failure or otherwise. He forbore to mention the steamers which had been referred to by the noble Lord, as he found by so doing he offended the owners; but he would ask the attention of hon. Members to certain evidence in support of his view that carrying grain in bulk was the cause of the loss of many ships, and especially to that of Mr. W. Dickinson, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and other shipowners of the North of England, who concurred in the opinion that nothing short of the enforcement of the rule of grain in bags would secure the safety of the ships—an opinion that was endorsed by large numbers of ships' captains. But it was said the cost of carriage would be much increased if grain were carried in bags. But the consumer was already paying for the bags, because the cargo was brought to the ship in bags. He had recently travelled down the Danube from Vienna, and had stopped at every grain port. There he saw the people of the country carrying the grain on board British ships in bags and emptying it into the holds. In French and other ships the bags were sewn up at a cost of 1½*d.* a dozen, and he could not help reflecting that an Englishman's life was as valuable as that of a Frenchman or an Italian. Those who had petitioned against his Bill had done so not because they disagreed with its provisions, but because they did not think that it comprised the whole case. Seventeen hundred officers associated in a society in Sunderland had sent a Petition, in which they said that a great amount of loss had been occasioned by vessels shifting their cargoes and foundering, and in which they asked the Board of Trade to compel the owners of steamers to carry their grain in bags and not in bulk. He had received a letter from Mr. William Young, a steamship master at Newcastle-on-Tyne, in which he said—

> "I have been for many years a steamship master in the grain trade, and I am convinced there are no means of securing the grain except by carrying it in bags."

The proposed remedy, which, if applied for one winter, would throw such a flood of light upon the subject in hand, was an exceedingly cheap one, as appeared from a great number of letters which he had received in answer to inquiries he had made to satisfy the noble Lord that there was no reason for the shipowners calling out that an enormous burden was being thrown upon them by the Bill. Tenders had been sent by various firms. One would charge 1*d.* per sack per month; another ½*d.* per sack per week; another ½*d.* per sack per week, 10 days being allowed for the first week; and so on. This, he pointed out, would be about the maximum cost, 1½*d.* on each sack of grain in cargo, say, from America; and that, he maintained, would not fall upon the ship's owner or the importer, but upon the consumer, who would have to pay for it 1-18th part of ¼*d.* on the price of a 4 lb. loaf. A letter he had received from Mr. W. M. Jaffray, agent for Mr. D. Mac Iver's steamers, put the additional cost caused by using bags at an average of 4 cents, and that sum covered the cost of sending back the bags to New York. Mr. E. B. Hadley, one of the largest millers in the world, stated that wheat was imported from India, New Zealand, and Australia in bags and sold to the miller. The cost of the bag would not average more than 8*d.* per quarter; but the bags could be sold again at the same price. The adoption of his remedy for a single winter would not involve any structural alteration in a vessel, or any considerable outlay of capital. It would not, in fact, involve the stroke of a chisel or the driving in of one nail. Some shipowners—for instance, the son of Mr. C. Mac Iver—adopted the precaution which he advocated; and all that he was desirous of doing was to render the practice of those who were careless of their ships similar to that of those who were careful of them. He had also in his hand a letter from a maker of sacks, in which the writer said that he could supply them at the rate of 6*d.* each, that they would last about 12 months, and that at the end of that time he would be glad to take them back at the rate of 2*d.* each. The House would therefore see that the expedient which he advocated was one which was exceedingly inexpensive. If there was, he might add, any real reason to fear that our trade would suffer at the hands of foreigners, he should not object to the introduction of any Amendment which might obviate that apprehension. It had also been pointed out to him that a large number of vessels which plied between this country and New York were specially constructed for the carrying of grain, in which grain could be conveyed quite as safely as in sacks, and it was unnecessary to say that he had no wish to extend the provisions of his Bill to cases in which to do so would be needless. He would be very foolish if he were to introduce into the measure anything which was unreasonable; but he had, he trusted, shown the House that the proposal which he made was inexpensive in the extreme. It would, he might add, obviate the necessity for the employment of surveyors at foreign ports. It would be self-acting, too, while it would not have the effect of hurting the ships in the least. The passing of the Bill would, besides, throw a flood of light on the proceedings of the Committee which the noble Lord proposed to appoint, and the whole machinery would be superseded as soon as action was taken on their Report, so that the measure would practically be one which would be in force for a single year only. In conclusion, he had merely to say that in Canada the principle of his Bill was strongly commended. Previous to 1872, a law had existed in the Dominion, by which a fine of $40 was imposed in the case of ships not being loaded according to regulation. It was found, however, that shipmasters preferred to infringe the law and pay the penalty. In that year, a stringent law was accordingly passed, compelling the proper loading of grain vessels, and, as a result, he had received a letter from the Port Warden of Montreal, in which, after referring to the loss of six steamers in 1872, the writer stated that the alteration of the law in rendering necessary the production of a certificate to show that a ship had been laden in accordance with the law, and had put to sea in a seaworthy condition, had operated so satisfactorily that during a period of seven years which had since elapsed no report had reached him of a grain-carrying ship from the port of Montreal having been lost from the shifting of the cargo. He had also a letter from the Assistant Minister of Marine in Canada, to show the good results which had followed from the action which had been taken there in the matter; and it only remained for him, having called attention to those documents, to thank the House for the patience with which they had listened to the remarks which he had felt it to be his duty to make.

Mr. C. M. PALMER said, the speech which they had just heard, and that of the noble Lord the President of the Board of Trade, must have convinced the House that this was a subject on which an inquiry must take place. To legislate hastily upon it would be doing injustice to one of the largest trades in the country, and nothing would better meet the views of practical men in the North of England than the appointment of a Select Committee of that House to inquire into the matter. He must, therefore, congratulate the noble Lord on having decided to take that step. He would not anticipate the labours of the Committee by entering into a discussion on the details of the question; but he might just remark two things—first, that many ships now carried grain which were never intended to do so, and which were quite unfitted to do so, either in bags or in bulk; and, secondly, that double-bottomed ships, for which he must take some responsibility, were designed not for the grain but for the coal trade; and it was not known that any ship in carrying coal had capsized, whether double-bottomed or not, if the cargo had been properly trimmed. He therefore hoped the attention of the Committee would be directed to these matters, which were a great source of mischief in the shipping trade as at present conducted.

MR. ONSLOW pointed to the importance of the question now under discussion as fully justifying the Notice of opposition which he had placed against the Bill of the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll), with the object of bringing it within the operation of the half-past 12 Rule. The Bill affected shipowners generally; and, therefore, it would have been very unfortunate had it been taken up at 1 o'clock in the morning in an empty House, and all he wanted was that a full and proper inquiry should be held before the House committed itself to any particular policy. The construction of ships was a most important element of the question which the proposed Committee would have to consider. He himself had often been surprised at the extreme narrowness of some of those which came through the Suez Canal, and had even thought that they were too narrow to carry ordinary cargoes with safety. There could be no doubt that some reform in the grain-carrying trade was necessary; and he thoroughly approved of the course the noble Lord had taken in referring the subject to a Select Committee.

MR. STEVENSON said, that if the question before the House had been the second reading of the Bill of the hon. Member for Derby he should have supported it. But the hon. Member himself had acknowledged that there were matters which required serious investigation, and that some modification of that Bill would have been required, and sending it to a Select Committee would have been the best way to deal with it. For instance, the provisions of the Bill were not necessary in vessels of small size, and some ships were now constructed to which it was not necessary to apply the provisions of the measure. In his opinion, the noble Viscount opposite (Viscount Sandon) had proposed too large a range of inquiry for his Committee. He would point out to the House that under the Merchant Shipping Act, whenever the loss of a ship took place, an official inquiry was held into the causes that led to it. Those inquiries had been limited to cases in which the conduct of the officers of the ship might be called in question. But in cases in which vessels went down with all hands, of course no inquiry into the conduct of officers could be held. He was glad to see that of late the Board of Trade had instituted inquiries into all cases of missing ships before the Wreck Commissioner; and the result of several of the recent inquiries had been the procuring of some very valuable information to shipowners, merchants, and underwriters. Of course, where a vessel foundered at sea, the chief questions that should be inquired into were with regard to its construction and mode of loading the cargo it carried. This was a good reason for limiting the inquiry to grain cargoes—that week after week they had the most valuable inquiries held by the Wreck Commissioner into the loss of vessels, and that they, therefore, were collecting valuable information on many points connected with the general loading of vessels. Already a beneficial alteration had taken place in the mode of constructing vessels. For some reason or other, a few years ago, vessels were built with very much too deep, perhaps in order to show a high, free-board, and the result of the experience gained had been to show the error of that construction. The practice of building vessels in that manner had been already abandoned. The inquiries had shown that the vessels which foundered were constructed with a depth disproportionate to their beam. He thought that the inquiry ought to be limited to the question of grain cargoes alone, for by that means the labours of the Committee would be brought into a narrow compass, and they would be enabled to Report in time for legislation during the present Session.

MR. SAMUDA said, that the House was very strongly in favour of the Committee asked for by the noble Lord the President of the Board of Trade. He could not follow his hon. Friend who had just sat down in wishing that the state of the inquiry should be limited to grain cargoes only. He was prepared to urge that the scope of the inquiry as proposed was not sufficient, and that it ought to be enlarged in order that a thoroughly satisfactory result might be obtained. In the first place, he wished to remind the House that there were two matters before it—one, that of the Committee proposed by the noble Lord, and the other the Bill of the hon. Member for Derby. In the course of his observations in moving for a Committee, the noble Lord had stated that he did not wish the Committee to deal with the

Bill of the hon. Member for Derby; but by the arguments he used the noble Lord seemed to be altogether opposed to the proposals contained in that measure. He should feel disposed to vote for the Bill of the hon. Member for Derby as a practical measure to endure for a limited period; but, nevertheless, he considered that this Committee might be very useful to supplement improvement in the mode of dealing with naval matters generally. The objection to make the Bill of the hon. Member for Derby a permanent measure appeared to him to be that it dealt, he believed satisfactorily, with cargoes of grain only, but that it did not touch cargoes of other material, such as coal and iron. He held in his hand a list of 14 vessels lost in a comparatively short time; he believed they were the identical ships referred to by the noble Lord. Of those vessels seven were grain laden and seven were not. It was perfectly clear to the House that if the Bill of the hon. Member was carried it would leave altogether untouched the seven vessels not laden with grain; and if they were to follow up their legislation on grain-laden vessels by attempting to deal with the other seven ships, they would find that they would require to be divided into three or four categories, according to their different cargoes, and dealt with in a separate manner. Indeed, it would lead to the introduction of legislation to govern the mode of loading each ship, and require stevedores to carry out their work by the sanction of an Act of Parliament. It did appear to him that the proposal of the noble Lord was liable to some objection from its not dealing thoroughly with the subject. It was proposed to do what everyone would desire to see done—namely, to search into the defective construction of ships, and into all other matters which it might be desirable to investigate connected with grain-laden vessels. But it would be most dangerous for Parliament to take upon itself to legislate as to the best construction of ships. In his opinion, the inquiry ought to be directed to ascertain whether there were not some general propositions which might be laid down and converted into law for minimizing the risks of ships at sea. He believed that some such propositions might be laid down. In his opinion, the chief, if not the only mode of insuring greater safety at sea was to deal with the question of insurance. If they limited insurance so that the owner could not only have no profit from the loss of his ship, but that he must be a loser by its loss, then they would give the shipowner the greatest possible incentive towards doing everything for the preservation of his ship and cargo. It was no new proposal that he was making, for it was the same principle which governed the case of house insurance from fire. If a person insured his house for a larger sum than the house was worth he could not receive it. The insurance offices in the case of loss could either re-build the house or pay the amount which they considered it worth. But in the case of a ship insured at Lloyd's, a bargain was entered into between the shipowner and the underwriter, by which the value of the ship was taken to be a certain sum, and in case of total loss you could not go behind this sum. If a ship met with an accident, not a total loss, then the whole amount insured was not recoverable; but if a total loss ensued, then the underwriter was bound to pay the whole sum whether the ship was worth it or not. It did appear to him to be a cardinal point requiring investigation as to whether shipowners should be allowed to insure vessels for a larger sum than they were worth, and whether they ought to receive more than three-fourths of their value in case of total loss. The House was aware that some of the greatest shipowners—such as Green and Wigram and the Peninsular and Oriental Companies—did not insure at all. Their greatest profit was derived from not insuring, and the course they adopted was this — They did what was necessary to insure the safety of their ships by seeing that there was no defective loading nor defective equipment nor any undermanning. It had been mentioned by some hon. Members during the course of the debate that many of the ships lost at sea were very much undermanned. Frequently in vessels of 1,800 or 2,000 tons there were so few men that there was no possibility of making a relief if any of the crew were disabled by illness from attending to their duties. In the event, therefore, of any accident occurring to some of the crew, a ship which was so undermanned would be practically helpless. But at present there was nothing to induce shipowners to man their vessels properly, because if the vessel by any chance arrived at its destination, then the shipowner had effected a saving in the expenses, and if it was lost, then he obtained his profit from the underwriters if he had insured beyond its value. He thought if the risk of loss were thrown upon the shipowner one of the greatest elements of difficulty in this matter would be overcome. In his opinion, they could not do better than leave the risk to the shipowner as to the safety of the vessel, restricting him only to make his profit from the success of the enterprize, and not from the loss of the vessel. If that were done, shipowners would soon discover the most satisfactory mode of constructing ships, and of equipping, and even of stowing ships. Our past experience of legislative interference in naval construction was such as to point to its avoidance in future. Formerly, the mode of measuring ships for tonnage was such that a very bad state of things indeed was produced; but by the present method of registration much improvement had been effected. If some method could be devised by which the risk of loss of vessels was thrown upon the owners, and their profit was made dependent upon the success of the enterprize alone, there would be a proper guarantee for good construction. He thought it of great importance to take into consideration in this inquiry all the various questions bearing upon the subject, and that very much good might be done by framing some general regulations for all shipping, rather than limiting the inquiry to grain-laden vessels.

SIR JOHN HAY said, that the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets had introduced a very large question into the debate. Although he agreed that the subject of insurance was one requiring consideration, yet he trusted that the scope of the present inquiry would not be enlarged. In saying that, he did not mean that he considered an inquiry into the question of insurance would not be advisable; but, in his opinion, the question of grain-laden ships was one well deserving the attention of the Committee, and one which required a speedy answer. If the Orders of Reference were enlarged, he doubted whether they would have any Report upon the subject in that Session of Parliament at all. He agreed with very much that had been said with reference to the Bill of the hon. Member for Derby; and, in his opinion, he looked for the best remedy in one direction. In his opinion, it was not necessary that grain should always be carried in bags. If grain were shipped in vessels without bulkheads, or any means of preventing the action of the sea, no doubt the vessel would get a list in one direction from the shifting of the cargo; but if a vessel were separated in compartments it was quite unnecessary that the grain should be stowed in bags. Even when stowing bags or sacks, grain might be liable to displacement by some accident, as bags themselves were liable to shift. He was glad to hear from his hon. Friends that such means of improved stowage had been adopted, that in some cases grain could now be carried in bulk with perfect security. He thought that the Committee would have enough to do in reporting to the House as to the desirability of the Bill of the hon. Member for Derby, and as to the proper precautions to be adopted in the stowage of grain cargoes. Upon the basis of the Report of the Committee, legislation could be made which would enable grain to be brought into the country without unnecessary risk to human life.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE was inclined to think that the scope of the inquiry proposed was quite wide enough. In his opinion, it would be very undesirable to extend the inquiry which the Committee was to undertake. With regard to the observations of the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets on the subject of insurance, he would like to mention that the subject was fully gone into by a Royal Commission a few years ago. They reported most strongly in a direction suggested by the hon. Member, and recommended that insurance upon vessels should be limited. In the opinion of the Commission, many of the losses at sea arose from over-insurance. Upon the recommendations of that Committee, so far as his recollection went, the Government prepared a Bill which they laid upon the Table of the House; but for some reason with which he was unacquainted that Bill had never been proceeded with. For his own part, he was most strongly in favour of the Bill, and he regretted extremely that the Government had never carried it through.

Unfortunately the Bill never got so far as the second reading; and, therefore, hon. Members had had no opportunity of expressing their opinions with regard to it. Having once fallen through, the Bill was never re-introduced, for what reason he could not state. When such a Bill should be again brought before the House he ventured to say that it would receive a great deal of support from that side of the House. It was his conviction that a very great deal could be done for insuring safety at sea by limiting the amount of insurance to be effected upon vessels. It was only by making shipowners lose money by the loss of their vessels, and preventing the loss they sustained being entirely covered by the insurance, that they could bring the motive of self-interest to bear upon them.

Mr. GOURLEY thought that, in dealing with the question of insurance, it would be found very difficult to gauge the value of ships. For instance, four years ago a vessel might have been worth £20 a-ton—a short time ago its value would have fallen to £5 a-ton—and it would probably now be worth £8 per ton. As between the shipowner and the insurer, he did not see how the value of a vessel under those circumstances could be ascertained. It seemed to him that was one of the most difficult questions that the Government would have to deal with, and that it was one which required more research and inquiry than was made by the Royal Commission to which reference had been made. The question which the House had then to consider was that raised by the hon. Member for Derby—namely, the loading of grain in bulk. The question was whether grain in bulk could be made what was designated in shipping language "good stowage." It was worthy of remark that vessels were now constructed for the purpose of carrying grain, and in such cases the grain was first stowed in the between decks, then beneath the lower hold, and above the water ballast. The plan of loading was to run in the grain from elevators. First the main hold was filled, and then the between decks; when the vessel got in a sea way the grain in the lower hold settled down, and if the cargo shifted in consequence of the water ballast at the bottom shifting, then, in many instances, the vessel capsized. In his opinion, it was quite impossible to load a ship properly with grain in bulk, and the only remedy was to enact a law that grain should be carried in bags, and not in bulk. The opinion of practical men—he meant those materially concerned in the navigation of their ships—was distinctly in favour of abolishing loading in bulk. He had recently had the honour of presenting a Petition from over 1,700 shipmasters and owners, in which it was stated that grain could only safely be carried in bags. The Petition went on to ask that a Select Committee might be appointed to inquire into the question, and also into other matters connected with shipping. But while he held the opinion that grain could not safely be carried in bulk, he also thought there were some exceptions to the rule. He believed that the hon. Member for Derby was disposed to make an exception in favour of vessels engaged in the Montreal trade. Those vessels carried grain between decks in bags; but in the lower hold, with the exception of two or three tiers, the grain was carried in bulk. But the grain in bulk was placed between boards and partitions in such a manner as to prevent any chance of shifting. Vessels engaged in the coasting trade would also probably form an exception to the rule, because they were mostly of a small size, and it was not necessary, in their case, to stow the grain in bags. He held that, whether vessels be great or small, there was danger in carrying grain in bulk, unless some measures had been taken specially to adapt them to this purpose. Some vessels had been fitted with bulk-heads, and others had also been divided into compartments. When, therefore, vessels of this kind were in question, an exception might be granted to vessels so specially adapted for carrying grain by Board of Trade licence; but where they had to deal with vessels constructed, as at present, with between decks and lower hold, and water ballast underneath, he held that it was impossible to carry grain in bulk with safety. He had not come to any hesitating conclusion on this question, for it had occupied his attention during a long time, and after considerable discussion with the members of the Shipowners' Society in Sunderland. When he said that the members of that Society were nearly all men who had themselves been to sea, and were personally acquainted for that reason with the navigation of ships, he thought that he was placing before the House sufficient evidence to prove that the opinions of such men ought to be received with considerable attention by hon. Members. One of the members of the Society to which he had referred, and who had been for 30 years at sea, and was then one of our largest shipowners, had told him that "when leaving port with a cargo of grain in bulk he never felt himself safe until the cargo had twice shifted, after which, in all probability, there would be very little chance of its shifting again;" the settling down, as expressed in the sea phrase, being then complete. The opinion of that shipowner had had with him more weight than any other opinions which had been laid before him, especially those of men of theory who had no practical experience in the loading and sailing of ships with grain cargoes on board. He would like to see the Government introduce a temporary Bill dealing with this question, which was one upon which the House already possessed abundance of information. It was perfectly true that differences of opinion existed upon this subject; but it was found that all the shipping associations, notwithstanding the differences of opinion amongst them upon some points, admitted the importance of an inquiry into the question of ships laden with grain. Not only the losses of last winter, but those which had occurred previously during a series of years, were quite sufficient to prove to the Government, to hon. Members, and to the country generally, that something in the shape of legislation was necessary with reference to the loading of grain cargoes. What he held to be necessary was that some measure should be passed such as that which had been submitted to the House by the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll), providing that all grain coming to the United Kingdom should be imported in bags, with the exceptions to which he (Mr. Gourley) had alluded in the case of vessels specially adapted to the trade. But, in dealing with this question, they had also to deal with the question of the carriage of grain by foreign ships. Now, it was the opinion of many shipowners in England that if it was made compulsory that all grain coming to the United Kingdom in British vessels should be imported in bags British shipowners would be handicapped by foreigners. There was a great deal of truth in this objection. The remedy, however, which he suggested was that it should be made the rule that all grain imported in bulk, whether in British or in foreign ships, should be subjected to a duty of 1*s.* or 2*s.* per quarter, according to the ports from which such grain might be imported. Hon. Members would see that unless the grain imported, say, in Swedish or Norwegian vessels, was subjected to this regulation, those vessels would practically get a large portion of the grain-carrying trade. He would make it law that any ships bringing corn in bulk from the Baltic should be subject to a differential duty of 1*s.* per quarter, and that those carrying grain in bulk across the Atlantic should be subject to a like duty of 2*s.* per quarter; and this, in his opinion, would prevent British ships from being handicapped by foreigners. There were some other points to which he would allude. He thought that the simplest and safest way of dealing with the question of stowage would be to enact that all grain carried across the Atlantic, with the exception of that coming from the port of Montreal, which was already subject to exceptional local rules, should be imported in bags. It had been found that in the Californian, Calcutta, and Australian trade, all grain was, at the present time, so imported. But it was said that the putting of grain into bags would cause much loss of time. No doubt, it was true that some loss of time would be occasioned; but it was clear that in a very short time the merchants, both in the United States and in the United Kingdom, would adapt themselves to the new state of things, and that when vessels arrived at New York and other ports they would find their cargoes ready in bags, just as they now found them ready for shipment in bags in Australia and Calcutta. There was no place in the world where a vessel could be loaded more quickly than in Calcutta, the rice and wheat being at that port always shipped in bags; and there was, therefore, no reason why wheat should not also be shipped in bags from the American ports. Had the question been raised by the shipping interest instead of by the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll), he felt sure that the Government would have at once assented to the change recommended by that hon. Member. He hoped that the necessity for dealing promptly with this question would be seen by hon. Members; and if they would legislate with regard to the loading of grain as between this country and the United States, he had no doubt that the shipping interest throughout the country would agree with him that the best mode of dealing with the subject would be to enact that all grain coming from Atlantic ports should be imported in bags.

Mr. MARK STEWART pointed out that a great difference existed in the capabilities of ships for carrying grain cargoes in bulk as between the coasting and ocean trades, for they all knew the difference between taking a short run from Ireland or Scotland, as the case might be, and crossing the Atlantic. He trusted that due protection would be given to the coasting trade, which was so essential to the interests connected with our own ports. As regarded the distinction between the ocean and coasting trades, it would be found on reflection that the danger which was apprehended from the former would be very much diminished in the other case, in which it was quite practicable to carry grain with safety by looking to the state of the weather. He expressed his satisfaction with the Bill of the hon. Member for Derby; and, having regard to the opposition which it was likely to meet with, he thought that the course taken by the Government would give satisfaction both to those who were in favour of the measure and to those who opposed it.

Mr. D. JENKINS would have voted for the Bill of the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) with some qualifications. He (Mr. D. Jenkins) contended that whether grain be stowed in bulk or in bags, it would be necessary to exercise care that the cargo should be safely secured, for every seaman knew that even a cargo stowed in bags was not safe without shifting-boards were made use of. But there were other points of greater importance than this which required to be looked into. For instance, the over-loading of vessels was a very serious question; and, in his opinion, the Act of 1876 relating thereto was altogether a failure. He would like to see some plan adopted for fixing the maximum load-line, which should be marked on the sides of all ships, and which, he believed, would prevent the very great evil of over-loading, that was now the cause of so much loss. Again, there was the question of undermanning, from which, no doubt, a large number of casualties occurred. With regard to the build of ships, he did not care what was their form of construction as long as they were navigated with skill; for, in his opinion, the safety of a ship depended upon the skill and care with which it was navigated—irrespective of its dimensions. He hoped the inquiry would tend to do good, and that loss of life would be lessened as soon as the Select Committee had made its Report.

Mr. BATES said, that the hon. Member for Sunderland (Mr. Gourley) had stated that he placed great faith in the opinions which he had received from practical men. Now, he (Mr. Bates) had received a document from Sunderland, which had, no doubt, also been received by many hon. Members. It emanated from the Society of British Ship Masters and Officers in Sunderland, and was a list of 30 steamships which had been lost. Hon. Members would be astonished when he told them that 28 out of the 30 vessels lost had been built in Sunderland and the adjacent ports, and that 24 of them had been fitted with water compartments. He maintained that the Bill which they were now discussing was, however well meant, valueless for the purposes for which it was intended, for the reason that it did not in any shape or way touch the root of the evil. He believed that the great cause of loss among these ships was that they were too long, too narrow, and too deep in build—that was to say, that they had too great depth of hold, too little breadth of beam, and too great length; in addition to that they had water ballast compartments. When a ship was loaded with cargo, as a matter of course the ballast compartments were empty, consequently there was a space of from one to two and a-half feet in the bottom of the ship empty above which the cargo was stowed, and the grain being raised in this way became more liable to shift, and the ship, in consequence, to "turn turtle" and to go to the bottom. In order to remedy this, he suggested that these water ballast compartments should be so fitted as to be able to receive grain in bags, which would give the ship more stability. That a cargo of grain could be carried safely in bulk he had no doubt whatever; but, in order to insure this, it was necessary that the ship should be divided into compartments made of iron. As to shifting-boards, he believed them to be valueless for this purpose; but if the vessel were divided down the middle by iron bulkheads running fore and aft as far as the engine-room, the cargo would be then in two equal portions, and if the vessel lay over one half of the cargo only would go to the lee-side. The expense of this arrangement would only occur once—namely, when the ship was built, and would be, in his opinion, in the end, less than the cost of modern bulkheads. It had been said that this plan would unfit the ship for general purposes; but he answered that these iron bulkheads could be fastened in such a manner as would allow them to be taken down when the ship was going to load a general cargo. They had only to be fastened to the keel, keelsons, beams, and other parts of the vessel with screw-bolts, and then they could be taken down when necessary, and would cost less in the end to the shipowner than shifting-boards. He would just give hon. Members his opinion as to what these grain-carrying ships ought to be. Ships crossing the Atlantic with grain cargoes should have greater strength and greater propelling power; they should not be more than seven times their beam in length, and they should not be more than two-thirds of their beam in depth. If they were fitted with water compartments, they should be so made that cargo could be stowed in them, and they should be fitted in compartments. Something had been said about the handicapping of British shipowners; and this was, no doubt, a very serious matter. He thought the best plan and the only plan to meet this difficulty would be to levy a fine upon all cargoes brought in bulk, whether in foreign or British ships, unless they were certified by the Board of Trade to be fitted for such cargoes in the manner in which they now certified for the carrying of passengers.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY, having no knowledge of ships, would not have entered upon this debate, were it not that in Ireland large quantities of oats were grown and exported coastwise. Now, if the Bill was carried as it then stood, it would apply to this Irish coasting trade and ruin it, while, at the same time, it would place the grower of oats at a great disadvantage. Had the Bill come before the House he should, in the interest of the trade to which he had referred, have voted against it. The vessels engaged in this coasting trade were of a peculiar construction. They were short and broad, and very few accidents had occurred to them, from their sailing over seas which were calmer than those which had to be crossed in other trades, and from their having an opportunity of running into port when a storm occurred. He trusted that the noble Lord would not entertain the suggestion of the hon. Member that the Bill should be passed provisionally; but he joined with those who wished to see a Bill passed during the present Session, which he trusted would be very carefully framed with a view to the protection of the interests which were involved in legislation upon this subject. He thought it would be a most unfortunate thing to adopt the suggestion which had been thrown out for a system of differential duties, which, in his view, savoured too much of Protection.

MR. MUNDELLA said, there could be no dispute as to the advantages which would result from the appointment of a Committee; but it must be borne in mind that no legislation could take place this Session, or, perhaps, during the next. With regard to the suggestion that the scope of the inquiry should be widened, so far as marine insurance was concerned, he reminded the House that that had been fully dealt with in the Report of the Royal Commission, and that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had promised to introduce, and did introduce, in 1876, a Bill for dealing with maritime contracts. But he did not believe there was any means of securing the maximum of safety until the shipowner had a greater interest in his ships coming safely to port than he now had in their not arriving. He knew that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had taken the best possible advice before withdrawing the Bill to which he had referred. It was most important the Government should deal with this question, because it did not affect grain cargoes alone, but all cargoes that floated in British bottoms. He would not put his experience against that of the hon. Member for Plymouth (Mr. Bates); but he had had the advantage of assisting the other day on a Committee, before which the best possible information was laid with regard to this question of grain cargoes. The question was put to that Committee,—" What would be the advantage of a Bill such as that brought in by the hon. Member for Derby?" The answer was from all sides that there could be no doubt that loss of life occurred from defective construction, but that the greatest blot on our carrying trade was the shipment of grain cargoes in bulk, and that from this cause there arose a greater loss of life than from all other causes put together. It had been urged that the additional cost of carrying grain in bags would increase the price of the grain; but it was necessary to place the advantages of this plan against its disadvantages. In the first place, it would materially diminish the cost of insurance; in the second place, the grain would be brought to market in a much better condition than at present; in the third place, there would be a great diminution in the loss of ships and cargoes; and, in the fourth place, there would be the saving of life; and, quite apart from this saving of life, he impressed upon the House that the advantages of the proposed plan would be equivalent to the pecuniary outlay for sacks. Having regard to the fact that they might enter upon one or more Sessions before legislation upon this matter took place, he asked the noble Lord the President of the Board of Trade whether—not for the coasting traffic, but merely for long voyages—he could not see his way to introduce some provisional measure, until such time as the whole question could be considered, which would require that all grain cargoes should be brought to this country in sacks? This proposal would go a great way to give experience and to guide legislation in that House; it would also show whether grain cargoes could be carried in bags without any large increase in expense, and whether a saving of life would be the result. The present system of carrying grain was the greatest blot upon our carrying trade; and he hoped it would be possible by some temporary measure to deal with it until the Committee could report, and a Bill could be brought in on the subject.

VISCOUNT SANDON thought that the House would now feel that it was time to close the discussion, which he might justly characterize as having been very useful and interesting. With regard to the speech of the hon. Member for Sheffield (Mr. Mundella), it seemed to him to be based upon the idea that the Committee could not report at all that Session. He had purposely confined the Reference in order to shorten the labours of the Committee; and he hoped that it would be able to report before the end of the Session, as he was most anxious that its recommendations should be carried out at once. The questions raised were most important, for they concerned human life. He saw no reason why the Committee should not get through its labours speedily, and report in time for a Bill to be brought in and passed before the end of the Session. He did not wish to be understood as meaning that the result of the labours of the Committee would be to show that any legislation whatever was necessary. He was certainly of opinion that if they could do without legislation it would be better, for any unnecessary fettering of a great industry should be avoided. He was sure that the hon. Member for Sheffield would agree with him upon that point. But if it were found that legislation was necessary, then he hoped that it would be completed during the present Session. He would observe, with reference to what many hon. Members had stated regarding the grain trade, that he was not at that moment prepared to say that the proposals of the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) were necessary. So far as he was informed, since 1875, the grain trade of this country had greatly increased, until the value of the imports now amounted to £150,000,000 a-year. But the proportion of ships engaged in the grain trade which had been lost was comparatively small, whereas there had been many hundreds of lamentable calamities to vessels laden with other cargoes. He thought it was really a question to be considered whether grain was the real cause of the loss of many vessels. Suppose that the carrying of grain in bulk was dangerous, and that great additional security to human life would be afforded by its being carried in bags. But, as he had previously stated, there was a great difference of opinion upon that subject, and that it required investigation. He had expressly guarded himself from stating any opinion upon the subject; but people of great experience had expressed the view that the danger to human life was not increased by the stowage of grain in bulk. He hoped that the Reference had been so framed that the question would be fully decided. With respect to the question of insurance, there was no doubt that the matter was one which required consideration. He wished to protest against one or two observations of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Sunderland (Mr. Gourley), in which he laid down the maxim that grain could not be safely carried in bulk. To that proposition he could not give his assent, but should wait the issue of the labours of the Committee.

MR. GOURLEY remarked, that he had laid that proposition down with certain exceptions. He had stated that it was the general rule that vessels engaged in the Montreal and the coasting trade were exceptions.

VISCOUNT SANDON said, that no doubt the hon. Member did not mean his assertion to be a sweeping one. The other point against which he must speak was a most serious suggestion to come from the other side of the House—that was the proposal that all ships that carried grain in bulk should be forced to pay a duty of 1*s.* or 2*s.* per quarter upon the grain so carried. He was surprised to hear those doctrines propounded by hon. Gentlemen upon the other side of the House; and if they were seriously meant he should not wonder if the Government were shortly asked to again put duties upon corn. So long as he had the honour to occupy the position he did, no protective duties of any kind would be put on. It must be understood that the object of the Government in this case was to obtain a thorough investigation, so that they would be enabled to legislate on the subject. Nothing would induce the Government to assent to the second reading of this Bill until investigation had convinced them that it was really required for the preservation of human life, and that it would not have the effect of destroying the great shipping interests upon which this country so much depended.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

And on March 5, Committee *nominated* as follows:—Mr. ARTHUR PEEL, Mr. J. G. TALBOT, Mr. BIDDULPH, Mr. ALGERNON EGERTON, Mr. THOMAS BRASSEY, Sir JOHN HAY, Sir HARCOURT JOHNSTONE, Mr. BATES, Mr. MUNDELLA, Mr. JAMES CORRY, Mr. GOURLEY, Mr. GORST, Mr. NORWOOD, Mr. KAVANAGH, Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY, Mr. BIRKBECK, Mr. STEVENSON, Mr. ONSLOW, Mr. JAMES STEWART, Mr. MULHOLLAND, Mr. SPENCER STANHOPE, Lord ARTHUR RUSSELL, and Mr. MAC IVER:—Power to send for persons, papers, and records; Five to be the quorum.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

STRENSALL COMMON BILL—[BILL 60.]

(*Lord Eustace Cecil, Colonel Stanley, Colonel Loyd Lindsay.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

LORD EUSTACE CECIL said, that this Bill was of merely a formal character, and he hoped that the House would now read it a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Lord Eustace Cecil.*)

MR. DILLWYN believed that there was an objection taken to the Bill.

LORD EUSTACE CECIL said, that he was not aware of any objection. None had reached him. The Bill was really of a purely formal character, and was to enable the Secretary of State to compensate the owners of common rights and ascertain what those common rights were. The House might be aware that Strensall Common had been purchased by the Government, and the present Bill was to make the necessary arrangements. Hitherto, Government had been unable to deal with the common rights which had started up. It was now proposed to hand the matter over to the Inclosure Commissioners to ascertain—first of all, what the common rights were, to whom they belonged, and what amount of compensation ought to be paid for them. So far as he had been able to ascertain from hon. Members, he could not find that there was any objection to the Bill. He trusted that the hon. Member for Swansea would withdraw his objections, and allow the second reading of the Bill to be taken.

Mr. DILLWYN said, that the objection to the Bill was not his own, but that of the hon. Member for Hackney, who had given Notice of Opposition. For his own part, he had no objection to the Bill, and he only wished to draw attention to the fact that it was opposed by the hon. Member for Hackney.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Thursday.*

ANCIENT MONUMENTS BILL—[Bill 51.]

(*Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Beresford Hope, Mr. Morgan, Sir Richard Wallace.*)

THIRD READING.

Order for Third Reading read.

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK in moving that the Bill be now read the third time, said, he trusted that he should be allowed to thank hon. Members who had come down so often and stayed so late to support the measure. His thanks were also due to hon. Members who were opposed to the Bill for their courtesy in waiving their individual objections and allowing the third readimg of the Bill to be taken without opposition. More particularly he wished to thank his hon. Friends the Members for North Northumberland (Earl Percy) and Tyrone (Mr. Macartney).

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."—(*Sir John Lubbock.*)

Earl PERCY was obliged to the hon. Baronet the Member for Maidstone for the compliment he had paid him; but he could not allow the third reading of the Bill to take place without one or two remarks. The hon. Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Beresford Hope) had made some very hard remarks at the end of last Session with regard to what he had termed his (Earl Percy's) obstruction of this Bill. He could only point out that the course they had taken had resulted in a considerable modification of the original measure, and in the adoption by the hon. Baronet the Member for Maidstone of various Amendments. Those Amendments having been accepted, they had been enabled to waive their objections to the Bill. But even now he was not entirely convinced of the utility of the measure, or reconciled to its provisions. Having regard, however, to the large modifications which the hon. Baronet had made in it, he thought it was more respectful to the House, which had passed the Bill by large majorities on several occasions, that they should withdraw their objections and allow the Bill to pass.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

CO-OPERATIVE STORES.

Select Committee of last Session *re-appointed,* "to inquire into the constitution and operations of certain Trading Societies, trading under the name of Co-operative Stores, and to ascertain whether they are exempted from taxes and imposts to which the trading community are liable:"—Committee to consist of Eighteen Members:—Sir Massey Lopes, Mr. Otway, Mr. Ridley, Mr. Blake, Sir George Elliot, Mr. Hardcastle, Mr. Arthur Mills, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Ripley, Mr. Baxter, Earl of Dalkeith, Mr. Macdonald, Mr. Isaac, Mr. James, Mr. Forsyth, Mr. Callan, Mr. Sheil, and Sir Charles Russell:—Power to send for persons, papers, and records; Five to be the quorum.

Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on Co-operative Stores of Session 1878-9 referred to the Select Committee on Co-operative Stores.—(*Sir Charles Russell.*)

House adjourned at half after One o'clock.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 25th February, 1880.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*Ordered—First Reading*—Supreme Court of Judicature (District Courts)* [87]; Cruelty to Animals* [88]; Middlesex Land Registry* [89]; South Western (of London) District Post Office* [90]; Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) Provisional Order* [91]; Patents for Inventions* [92].

Second Reading—County Courts [6]; Hypothec Abolition (Scotland) [34]; Blind and Deaf-Mute Children [41], *debate adjourned;* Judicial Factors (Scotland)* [50]; Excisable Liquors Traffic (Scotland)* [49]; Common Law Procedure and Judicature Acts Amendment* [80].

Second Reading—Referred to Select Committee—Bankruptcy Act (1869) Amendment* [46].

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

COUNTY COURTS BILL—[BILL 6.]

(*Mr. Norwood, Mr. Rowley Hill, Mr. Watkin Williams, Sir Eardley Wilmot.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. NORWOOD, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that before he proceeded to explain the clauses of the measure, he thought it right to remind the House of the circumstances under which the Bill appeared before them. In the Session of 1878 there were no less than four County Courts Bills introduced by private Members—one by the hon. Baronet the Member for South Warwickshire (Sir Eardley Wilmot), another by the hon. Member for Worcester (Mr. Rowley Hill), another by himself (Mr. Norwood), and a fourth by the hon. Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr. J. Cowen). The three first Bills were very similar in purport, although they differed in certain details; and it was the pleasure of the House to refer them to a Select Committee. The Committee sat for 17 days and examined a considerable number of witnesses, among them being Lord Justice Bramwell and Mr. Hollams, both Members of the Judicature Commission, and various County Court Judges, mercantile men, and solicitors. After full deliberation, the Committee made their Report, the gist of which was—first, that there should be no increase in the exclusive jurisdiction of the County Courts; that there should be concurrent jurisdiction in an extended class of cases; that the salaries of the County Court Judges should be raised to £2,000 per annum; that they should be entitled to a pension amounting to two-thirds of their salary, after 20 years' service; that the Registrars should not be permitted to practice either in their own districts or elsewhere; and that the hon. Member for Hull be requested to bring in a Bill in conformity with those recommendations. The present Bill was precisely as it left the Select Committee. The provisions of it were simple. In the first place, there was no extension of exclusive jurisdiction in any form. The concurrent Common Law jurisdiction was extended from £50 to £200, actions for the recovery of rent from £50 to £200, and actions of ejectment from £20 to £40. The 4th clause of the Bill, and the one to which he attached the most importance, was in harmony with the recommendations of the Judicature Commission, and had received the approval of law reformers since the days of Lord Brougham. It was to the effect that, with the exception of Probate, Divorce, and Admiralty business, it should be competent for the plaintiff to bring his action, whatever the amount, in the County Court, with full power, as a right, for the defendant to move for the transfer of the case into the Superior Courts. As he regarded the matter, this was really the most important clause of the Bill. It knitted together, in the most complete way, the County Court system and that of the Supreme Court itself; and he was of opinion that if the Bill contained nothing more than this 4th clause it would be a very valuable and important measure. It was unnecessary that he should defend the course taken by the Bill, because not only was it approved of by the Select Committee, but the Government themselves had endorsed the views contained in the measure in the most marked manner. Last Session they took a somewhat unusual course, for notwithstanding the fact that the Bill sent down by the Select Committee was then before the House of Commons, the Government introduced a Bill in the House of Lords, through the Lord Chancellor, which was very similar in its character to the measure recommended by the Select Committee, although not altogether identical with the Bill he was now introducing. It was a very excellent measure, and contained many clauses that were not only unobjectionable, but would be of the utmost advantage. He might, therefore, claim that he had the approval of the highest Legal Officer in the Kingdom and of the Government on behalf of his Bill. One objection which he had heard raised against the Bill from time to time, and particularly from members of the Legal Profession, was this—"It is all very well to extend the jurisdiction; but we maintain your Judges are not competent to exercise such jurisdiction." They said, in effect, that the County Court Judges were an inferior class of men. He (Mr. Norwood) ventured to differ altogether from that opinion. He thought that some of the learned gentlemen who administered the law in the County Courts were quite equal to the Judges in the Superior Courts. He believed that the great bulk of those gentlemen were perfectly competent to discharge not only their present functions, but the extended jurisdiction which would be imposed on them by this Bill. If, as he feared it might be the case, there were some gentlemen who were not so learned or able as might be wished, he could only say that the fault was not in the County Court system, but in those upon whom devolved the responsibility of appointing the Judges. Of course, he could not speak from personal knowledge of the qualifications of those gentlemen. He was only a layman, and was, therefore, not competent to form an opinion. He was bound, however, to admit that appointments were occasionally made to the County Court Bench which met with almost universal reprobation from those who were best qualified to form an opinion—namely, the Bar itself. He did not allude to any one Lord Chancellor, or to any one Party in politics more than another; but it was very painful—more than painful, it was a serious injury to the administration of justice—that from time to time unknown and incompetent men should be appointed instead of the best men available. There was another cause why sometimes the County Court appointments were not satisfactory, and that was that the salaries paid to those gentlemen did not give that large choice to the Lord Chancellor which he would otherwise possess. He (Mr. Norwood) thought himself that the present salary of £1,500 a-year was scarcely sufficient to induce a gentleman, who had had a most expensive education and training, to sacrifice his prospects at the Bar at a comparatively early period of life. It was, therefore, notorious that when they had satisfactory appointments—and he repeated again that able and learned men did exist on the County Court Bench—they were too frequently men who had passed the prime of life, who wished for rest and retirement, and who therefore accepted a position of comparative ease, which, under other circumstances, they would not have consented to occupy. The question really was this—was it not a matter of expediency, as well as justice, that they should remunerate the County Court Judges somewhat more handsomely? There were 57 County Court Judges, who received £1,500 a-year. Three or four of that number had £1,800 a-year under an old rule, which came into operation many years ago. The utmost burden the present proposal would place upon the Consolidated Fund would be £27,300 a-year if every Judge were advanced to £2,000 a-year. But it was in evidence that it would be easy for the Lord Chancellor, with the power which he now possessed, to reduce the number of Judges by a re-arrangement of the existing Circuits, which would make a great reduction in the amount of extra charge that would be thrown upon the Consolidated Fund. He might point out, as a matter of justice to the present Judges, that they had no increase at all in their salaries since the year 1865, and yet the amount of extra work thrown upon them had been very great. Between the years 1865 and 1878, no less than 32 additional Statutes had been passed, which threw extra duties upon the County Courts. Under the Bankruptcy Law, as consolidated in 1869, the entire burden, as far as the Provinces were concerned, of the administration of the Bankruptcy Law devolved upon the County Courts. In point of fact, those Courts had this unique jurisdiction—that the Judge himself was competent to decide all questions of law which arose out of the administration of the Statute. That fact alone was, he thought, quite sufficient to show the importance of the functions exercised by the Judges. He was afraid that he himself had been a guilty person, inasmuch as he had been instrumental in throwing additional labours upon them, in respect to the two Bills he had introduced giving Admiralty jurisdiction. He had then proposed a clause to increase the salaries of the County Court Judges by £500 a-year; but it was withdrawn on an assurance from the Government that the case of these gentlemen would receive full consideration. In 1869 a Motion was made by the hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. Hibbert) that £300 additional should be given, and the proposition was seconded by a right hon. Gentleman who now occupied the important position of Home Secretary, and who advocated the proposed increase as a matter of justice to the

Judges. He had not dwelt longer upon this point than he considered to be necessary to place the question fully before the House; but he wished the House to bear in mind that the business of the County Courts had greatly increased of late years. The increase in the amount derived from County Court fees since 1865 amounted to £150,000 per annum. The bankruptcy fees were not so easily ascertained; but he was assured that at least £20,000 a-year of surplus profit went into the Exchequer from that source alone. Then, again, all the cost of the old bankruptcy system was saved, and it amounted to £56,470 per annum; and if the additional jurisdiction was given under the Bill, there would, of course, be a large increase in the business of the County Courts, and the income derived from fees would grow in proportion. The gross disproportion which existed between the salaries of the Registrars on some of the chief County Court Circuits and those of the Judges deserved a passing remark. There were two or three Returns on this subject—one obtained by the hon. and learned Member for Durham (Mr. Herschell), and another by his hon. Friend the Member for Bristol (Mr. Morley). From these Returns it appeared that, in addition to the emoluments derived by some of the Registrars holding the office of High Bailiff, and that many of them were Registrars of the High Courts by virtue of holding the office of Registrar of the County Courts, the amount of fees derived by Registrars in large towns was in excess of the salary of the Judges. For instance, the two Registrars of the Birmingham Court, after paying for clerks and all outgoings, received £5,665, being a sum of £2,832 10*s.* each, or nearly double the salary of the Judge of the Birmingham County Court. The Registrar of the Bradford Court received £3,188, and the two Registrars of the Leeds Court £3,471, which gave them an average of £1,735 10*s.* each. At Newcastle, where there was only one Registrar, the fees amounted to £3,341, and in Nottingham the one Registrar received £1,909. Thus the chief officer of the Court received a fixed salary of £1,500 a-year, while the subordinate officer—the Registrar—was receiving, in some cases, nearly double. As he had said before, he had no wish to enter too fully into the details; but he must submit that a fair case had been made out on behalf of a hard-working class of public servants, the vast majority of whom were able men, who discharged their duty well. Since their original appointment they had been called upon to perform many additional functions; and as those functions were of extreme value to the country, it was only right that the gentlemen who discharged them should receive the increased salaries proposed by the present Bill. He was of opinion that the additional sum which he proposed to give to the Judges—namely, the increase from £1,500 to £2,000 a-year, would be money well spent. That the County Courts were highly appreciated throughout the country at the present moment was shown by the fact that the number of suitors who resorted to them was increasing every year. He was of opinion that every subject of Her Majesty was entitled to have any case in which he was interested tried by a gentleman of undoubted judicial power and ability; and if that was not always the case at present one reason why it was not so was that the salary was not sufficient. If the proposals contained in the present Bill were adopted, and the salary were raised from £1,500 to £2,000, it would certainly open a much larger field of selection. There was only one other question to which he considered it necessary to allude, and that was the clause which would entitle the County Court Judges to a retiring pension, amounting to two-thirds of their salary, after 20 years' service. The position of a County Court Judge at this moment was this—that he could not obtain a retiring pension unless he made an affidavit that he was physically incompetent to discharge the duties of the office. He thought that was a very invidious position in which to place a public servant like a County Court Judge. It was, therefore, recommended that the County Court Judge, in reference to his retirement, should be in the same position as the Judges of the Superior Courts, and that, after the long service of 20 years, he should be entitled to a retiring pension amounting to two-thirds of his salary. In conclusion, he would only add that the present County Court system was working with extreme satisfaction. Upwards of 1,000,000 plaints were introduced into the County Courts last year. The system brought justice to the very doors of the people, and the transactions were growing in numbers and importance every day. In the meanwhile, the price of agricultural and other produce was increasing. In point of fact, every article of consumption was increasing in value, and that was in itself an argument for giving an increase in the amount of concurrent jurisdiction. There was also another consideration which was of the greatest possible importance. It was well known that the block of business in the Superior Courts had been a matter of comment of late years. It had often been discussed, and it had been pointed out how seriously it interfered with the business of the country, and, at the same time, that it was undesirable to increase the number of the Judges of the Superior Courts. He would simply add that this measure, the second reading of which he now moved, would have a very distinct and beneficial effect in reducing the amount of business which now crowded the Superior Courts.

Sir EARDLEY WILMOT, in seconding the Motion, congratulated his hon. Friend on the perseverance and ability which he had shown in dealing with this subject; but he could not congratulate Her Majesty's Government on the course they had thought proper to adopt with respect to the measure. In 1875 he introduced a Bill having for its object optional jurisdiction—that was to say, giving a plaintiff power in any case to sue in the County Court. He proposed that alteration in the law after having had an interview with the late Lord Brougham, the founder of County Courts, who was anxious to see that improvement adopted. He was, however, induced to withdraw the Bill on the assurance from the Secretary to the County Courts at the Treasury that the Government proposed in the ensuing Session to bring in a Bill to extend the jurisdiction of County Courts. That promise was not fulfilled. In 1877 he introduced again the same Bill; but it was opposed by the Attorney General, representing the Government, and the second reading was negatived without a division. He was sorry that his learned Friend the Attorney General had not more power in this matter, because he was sure that if it were left to him the question would have been settled long ago. He remembered, however, that Lord Selborne as Sir Roundell Palmer and Attorney General had stated that these things were all in the hands of the Lord Chancellor, the Attorney General being a mere dummy. In 1878 three Bills were introduced dealing with several branches of the subject, and, at the suggestion of the Attorney General, they were referred to a Select Committee. The Committee, of which he had the honour of being Chairman, sat for 17 days, and examined a vast number of witnesses, amongst whom were two gentlemen who were acting on the Superior Courts of Common Law Commission—Lord Justice Bramwell and Mr. Hollams, an eminent solicitor. After careful consideration, the Committee came to the conclusion that the jurisdiction of County Courts ought to be extended, that certain excluded subjects of action should be admitted, and that after 20 years' service the Judge should be entitled to a retiring pension. The result of their deliberations was embodied in a Bill, which, however, could not be passed at so late a period of the Session. In the next Session—namely, 1879, his hon. Friend the Member for Hull (Mr. Norwood) again introduced his Bill; but the Government met him by introducing a Bill of their own in the House of Lords, which, after receiving a second reading, was never heard of again. As a firm supporter of Her Majesty's Government, as one who approved highly of their foreign policy, he felt bound to say that they had not shown equal ability, energy, and determination in the administration of domestic affairs. Had they done so, with the powerful majority at their command, many of the social questions now awaiting legislation might have been satisfactorily dealt with long ago. The Criminal Code Bill, for instance, which was going to a Committee, might have had a chance, which it did not now possess, of being passed this Session. Another point upon which the Committee did not pronounce an opinion, but with respect to which he believed they were nearly all agreed, there being only one dissentient on the Committee, was the desirability of occasionally promoting County Court Judges to seats in the Superior Courts. That was frequently done in France and in America, and it would not only have the advantage of transferring experienced and able men from one Bench to another, but it would be a stimulus to the County

Court Judges to keep themselves in legal matters up to the mark. He thought his hon. Friend the Member for Hull had very properly made his Bill applicable to all Courts of inferior jurisdiction; but if the House should think that the privileges of the Lord Mayor's Court and other local Courts ought to be retained, that was a question which might very fairly be dealt with in Committee. He had himself been for 18 years a County Court Judge, and he could bear testimony to the great responsibilities and labour devolving on the office; and he hoped the salary question would receive the most careful consideration from Her Majesty's Government, for he thought £2,000 a-year was not at all too much. The Bar of England opposed this increase of salary; but, in doing so, he thought they made a mistake. He earnestly hoped this important measure would receive the favourable consideration of Her Majesty's Government.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Norwood.*)

MR. ALDERMAN COTTON said, that although he should refrain from moving the rejection of the measure, he could not agree that the County Courts were popular, and declared that, although they were "cheap," he might almost say they were "nasty." His object in rising was to say a few words in favour of the exemption of the Lord Mayor's Court of the City of London from the provisions of the Bill. That Court was one of the most expeditious in its action of any in the Kingdom, and its popularity with the citizens exceeded that of the suitors in the County Courts. It was one of the most ancient Courts in England, and had always stood well in the estimation of the commercial public. In 1873 it disposed of no fewer than 16,357 actions, attachments, and other suits. At that time the learned Judge who presided over the Court of Common Pleas, which was not so much blocked with business then as it was now, took offence at the Lord Mayor's Court, and, by prohibitions, prevented a large amount of business from passing into it. So much did this tell against the Lord Mayor's Court that the number of suits was reduced, in 1874, to 13,585; in 1875, to 8,629; and in 1876, to 8,548. The action of the Common Pleas was then put an end to by another Judge, who said that that Court had gone mad on the subject of the Lord Mayor's Court. The result was that, in 1877, the cases in the Lord Mayor's Court rose to 11,370; in 1878, to 12,975; and in 1879, to 14,016. These figures showed the great popularity and usefulness of the Court, and he felt sure that the House would hesitate before it interfered with a Tribunal which was so useful to the commercial body of the City of London. The power of attachment was in itself most useful to prevent great wrong being done. Instead of a uniform system of County Courts throughout the country, he should prefer a uniform system of Lord Mayor's Courts.

MR. B. WILLIAMS admitted that the Lord Mayor's Court had exercised a salutary jurisdiction in civil cases. Other Courts had jurisdiction of a similar character, and even in the remote town that he had the honour to represent there was a Recorder's Court, the jurisdiction of which was not limited to any amount whatever. These Courts might be dealt with at the proper time; but the question now before the House was whether this Bill, which embodied a measure of reform that was loudly demanded in every populous district in the country, should pass into law. Formerly, he looked on these proposed changes with disfavour; but at last, in consideration of their general approval in the country, he had come to regard them with reluctant favour. Although, as a practising Common Law barrister, his own income would be considerably decreased by the passing of this Bill, yet its provisions were of such importance to the commercial and working classes that he would be wanting in public spirit if he refrained from expressing his approval. The theory existed that the Superior Courts ought to do substantially the legal work of the country; but that legal work had so grown, and had become so complicated, that the centralization of the law which had existed in this country since the Conquest would commence to cease to exist if this Bill became law. The Judicature Acts had not simplified procedure in any way, nor had they facilitated the obtaining of justice by the poor. On the contrary, what with counterclaims, interrogatories, appeals, and expensive references to official referees and arbitrators, those Acts had increased the expense of litigation. Again, the solicitors in London who were agents for country solicitors were naturally interested in bringing business to London, and the Courts at Westminster were crowded with cases which could much better be tried in the country. He regretted, also, to have to say that the Judges had shown a great dislike to being detained in Assize towns, and had consequently manifested a great tendency to transfer cases from the country to the Metropolis. The present system had also the effect of accumulating large masses of written or printed papers, with the inevitable result of delay and expense. This was not legislating in the interest of the poorer classes. Accordingly outside the House, and especially in all the great centres of commerce, there had arisen an irresistible demand for the extension of the County Court jurisdiction. As the people no longer hoped to get cheap and speedy justice from the Judges of the Superior Courts, they sought to obtain it from some other quarter. In his opinion, however, the transference of business from the Superior Courts to County Courts would be only cutting the knot and not solving it. At present the County Courts were not prepared for a very great increase of business, and he thought the system should be so amended by the Bill as to be more adapted for the increased jurisdiction proposed to be conferred. He would suggest that Judges of County Courts should hold quarterly sittings, in which all the waiting cases should be tried in their order of entry, as at the Assizes, so that there would be a kind of County Court Assizes. It was also a question for consideration whether some sort of pleading should not be introduced. The Lord Chancellor's Bill, by which it was proposed to increase the work of the County Court Judges, had not proposed also to increase their pay. It would have been necessary to do so, and also to choose the very best men available for the posts. On the whole, he supported the Bill of the hon. Member for Hull, though he intended to bring forward several Amendments in Committee. He hoped some delay would be granted, so that those who were interested in the question would have time to consider how the Bill could be best amended; but the time had come when something should be done to relieve the Superior Courts of some portion of their work, and to bring law and justice to the doors of the poor.

Mr. WHEELHOUSE, in moving that the Bill be read a second time that day six months, congratulated the hon. Member for Hull (Mr. Norwood) upon the clear and definite statement he had given of the objects of the Bill in introducing the measure; but, having said that, he was sorry to say that he could not agree with the views expressed by hon. Members who had taken part in the debate, except those advanced by the hon. Member for the City of London (Mr. Alderman Cotton). The Bill appeared to him (Mr. Wheelhouse) to be a Bill for the purpose of giving exclusive, or nearly exclusive, jurisdiction to the County Courts of this country, by taking away from the Assize Courts and the Courts of Nisi Prius the jurisdiction that had hitherto been assigned to them. He had not the slightest objection to the proposal to raise the salary of the County Court Judges from £1,500 to £2,000 a-year, if it was thought desirable; but he strongly objected to the statement that if that was done the Lord Chancellor would have a better class of men to select from in making the nominations. He believed that the present County Court Judges were quite as good as any that would be tempted to accept the office if the salary was raised as proposed. He had many objections to the measure; and one was that, although it was said the Bill would not interfere with the jurisdiction of other Tribunals, he believed it would practically sweep them away, and abolish what was called local jurisdiction. He believed that there were many local Courts, such as those of the Lord Mayor in London, the several Sheriffs and their Assessors, Courts of Venue, and such Courts as that of Passage at Liverpool, which did their work wonderfully well, with their jury of 12, following the rules of the Superior Courts at Westminster. Why should these be abolished, merely for the purpose of enlarging the jurisdiction of a Tribunal which was originally instituted for the recovery of small debts? He could see no motive whatever, nor the slightest necessity for such change. Reference had been made to the Judges, and on that point he wished to make a few observations. No doubt, there were one or two splendid exceptions to the general rule, and he did not know why he should not mention one of them, and that was the Judge of the Bradford County Court, Mr. Daniel. He apprehended that no Judge who ever sat upon the Bench did his work more judicially and more carefully than he did; but that was not the character of all the County Court Judges in England. There were, in fact, many instances in which the County Court Judge was individually not popular in his district, and there were charges made against them, now and again, of giving undue preference. Some of them had their sons or nephews everlastingly practising before them; and it was said occasionally, whether rightly or wrongly, it was not for him to say, that the verdict, in too many such cases, was very apt "to follow the son." If the popularity of County Courts was referred to, it seemed to him to simply amount to this—that the poorer classes had no other means of getting that which was due to them. Now, if anyone went into a County Court, especially in a large provincial town, he would very often, though by no means always, find it dirty and unclean, and filled with a number of people against whom they would not brush if they could possibly avoid it; and, so far from their being popular with the heads of the Profession, he knew that nearly every solicitor of the highest note or repute in the United Kingdom objected to go into them if he could possibly avoid doing so. As to the increase of business in County Courts, it was due to the fact that many persons knew perfectly well that if they dared to go to the higher Courts with such inquiries they might have to pay a large amount of costs. But was that justice? No; it was merely sending a man to the Court perforce, and to which Court he did not wish to go, merely because it might suit the other side to force him to that Tribunal. It was idle, therefore, to speak of the County Courts as being as popular as the Assize Courts or the Courts of Nisi Prius generally. They were told that this Bill was intended to benefit that class of people which, somehow or other, they heard of pretty often theoretically in this place; but about whose existence as litigants, except as defendants for small sums, they did not hear much anywhere; and to say that it was to be a benefit to the poorer classes of this country to raise the jurisdiction of County Courts from £50 to £200 was really, with all due deference, to actually put the rich man himself in the position of the poor man, and to force him down by the action of the screw. If any man was obliged to sue for a sum less than £200 in one jurisdiction alone, all he had got to say was that was a hardship upon him, and especially if that jurisdiction was one in which the Judge very often sat alone, and in which, when assisted at all, he had a jury of only five, which was not the number in a case at Nisi Prius. For his own part, he would rather not go to such a Tribunal, if he could help it, however much he might respect the individual Judge. They were given to understand that great alterations would have to be made in the Bill in Committee, if it was allowed to pass the second reading. He thought it would be better not to pass the second reading until they had increased knowledge beyond what they at present possessed of the intended provisions which were to be inserted. He very much objected to skeleton Bills, where they did not know precisely what they were doing, and still less knew what they were to expect would be put into the measure hereafter. In his opinion, it was infinitely preferable that Bills of this character should be in the hands of the Government, who would be responsible for them, rather than that of a private Member; and there being all the objections to this measure which he pointed out, he thought he was justified, under the circumstances, in moving its rejection.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Wheelhouse.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. HIBBERT said, he was not surprised at the speech of the hon. and learned Member who had just sat down, because it was quite in accordance with every speech the hon. and learned Member made when measures of progress were brought before the House. It was, however, to say the least of it, singular to argue against the extension of the jurisdiction of County Courts because the places in which they were held were dirty and unattractive to the public. This was a great measure, and one of great importance as regarded the interests of the people of this country. If the Courts were in a dirty and unsatisfactory state the attention of the Government ought to be called to the matter, the Courts being entirely under their management, with a view to the necessary improvements being effected. When, however, the hon. and learned Member argued that the County Courts were not popular, he took a view which was not held by many Members of the House. If they only looked at the great progress those Courts had made, with respect to the amount of business they had done since they were established many years ago, they could only come to the conclusion that they were ably performing their duties, and were most popular Courts in the eyes of the people of this country. As showing the advance which the County Courts had been making in the amount of their business and in popularity, he would quote some statistics, from which it appeared that in the year 1850 the number of plaints entered in the County Courts was 390,000; in 1866, when there was an increased jurisdiction given to them, it was 872,000; in 1877 it was 1,024,000. It was impossible that there should have been such an increase if the people had not been satisfied that the Courts were fairly and properly dealing with the cases before them. Again, an equally strong proof of their popularity was found in the fact that the amount of money involved in the cases had advanced from £2,052,000 in 1866 to £3,330,000 in the last year of the Return. To the Committee which sat two years ago, Memorials were presented from most of the commercial bodies of England, and from various incorporated law societies, in favour of increasing the jurisdiction of the County Courts. Therefore, it might be concluded that these Courts were doing a large and good work, which justified the supporters of the Bill in asking the House to assent to the second reading of the Bill by which it was proposed to extend their jurisdiction. From time to time increased jurisdiction had been conferred on the Courts. From 1865 to 1878 no fewer than 32 Acts of Parliament had been passed, conferring new and extended powers—some more and some less. Among these powers, jurisdiction had been given in equity to a limited extent, and in 1877 they found that these Courts had 613 equity cases before them. In 1867, another jurisdiction, which showed more than anything else the confidence which the Judges had in these Courts, was conferred, when power was given to the Judges of the Superior Courts to send cases to the County Courts to be tried. In 1877, no fewer than 770 cases of an important character were so remitted to the County Courts. In 1868, Admiralty jurisdiction was given; and in 1877 there were 370 Admiralty cases considered by these Courts. In 1869, bankruptcy jurisdiction was transferred to them, and that transfer had been the means of saving between £50,000 and £60,000 a-year to the country. In 1877 there were 9,900 petitions in bankruptcy and insolvency, and 1,280 court debtor summonses considered by the County Courts. The House had been told that this Bill would injure the members of the Common Law Bar. It was very doubtful if such a result were at all likely to follow; but, at all events, the business of Parliament was to look to the interests of the public, which were certainly bound up in this proposal. His hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Wheelhouse) did not think that the proposal made in the Bill would benefit the poorer classes. But, even if that were so, he did not see why the classes just above the poorer classes, and also shopkeepers of the lower middle class, and even the more wealthy classes, should not have the advantage of cheap law. They knew that there was a great block of business in the Superior Courts, and this measure would afford them great relief. With regard to Clause 10 of the Bill, limiting the amount of costs to be allowed in certain actions, the fact was that that clause, with certain alterations made by the Solicitor General, was passed by the Select Committee unanimously. That clause was not meant to interfere with the few Local Courts, but was intended only to prevent them abusing the present system by the great costs they might bring on defendants, and he trusted the House would support it in Committee. He knew nothing about the City of London Court; but he was acquainted with the Courts in Lancashire to which this law was especially directed, and great complaints were made by the poorer classes of the serious hardships which they suffered in those Courts. He had moved for a Return with respect to the solicitors' costs in regard to cases of small amount in the Salford Hundred Court of Record; and he thought, when hon. Members examined it, they would agree that it was quite time that some limitation should be put upon the abuses which occurred in the Local Courts. He found, for instance, that for obtaining £15 the solicitor's costs were £47, to obtain £10 they were £42, to obtain £5, £24; and, again, in a case of £10, they were £61. In the cases taxed, as if tried in County Courts, on the other hand, to obtain £9 19*s*., the taxed costs were £3 2*s*. 8*d*.; to obtain £7 9*s*. they were £2 15*s*. 2*d*., and to obtain £5 they were £2 0*s*. 8*d*. That comparison went far to justify a clause of that nature. Large questions would naturally go to the High Court of Justice, and this clause did not interfere with them at all, but dealt specially with Local Courts. As to the clauses dealing with the salaries and pensions of the County Court Judges, he believed the Solicitor General was in favour of what was proposed, and that the Attorney General was not unfavourable, though he feared the Government might not be willing to give its assent. But even the most economical Member of the House might support the clauses, because it was desirable that when good work was to be done it should be done by good men; and it was impossible to get good men without paying them good salaries. He was convinced that the amount received from the additional fees—to say nothing of bankruptcy fees—that would come in under this Bill, would more than make up for the proposed additions to the salaries. Last year the total cost of the County Court system was £583,483, and the amount received by the Exchequer £426,400, leaving £157,088 to be made up in other ways. Thus the County Courts contrasted in this respect favourably with the Superior Courts, the total expenditure upon the latter being £514,420, towards which the receipts in the way of fees, &c., were £249,056, leaving a balance to be made up of £265,354. Although there had been such a great increase of the business of the Courts, no increase in the salaries of the Judges had been made since 1855. In 1869, when bankruptcy business was transferred to the County Courts, he brought forward a Resolution in the House in favour of increasing the salaries by £300, and he was fortunate enough to be supported by his right hon. Friend who was now Home Secretary. Therefore, he could appeal to three Members of the Government—the Home Secretary, the Attorney General, and the Solicitor General—on this point, and say he hoped the Government might see its way to grant the increase proposed in the Bill. But, supposing the Treasury were not prepared to find the £25,000 that would be required for the purpose, the Lord Chancellor might reduce the Circuits, and save money by so doing. The Registrars and High Bailiffs had their incomes very much increased through fees; while the salaries of the Judges remained the same, and were, in many cases, much below the incomes received by the Registrars. For instance, while Mr. Daniell received a salary of £1,500, the Registrar of his Court received £3,128 last year. At Birmingham, while the Judge received £1,500, there were two Registrars who received between them more than £5,500. In Newcastle the Registrar received £3,341. Similar anomalies existed in other large towns; and there could be no doubt that, by a judicious improvement in this direction, an increase of the Judges' salaries might be effected without adding to the total expenditure. But if the Government were not prepared to grant a salary of £2,000 all round, they might do so in the case of the six Judges of the Metropolitan Courts, where the business done was of great importance, and also in eight Circuits connected with large towns, such as Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, and Leeds. Of the remaining 25 Judges, those of 10 years' standing might receive £1,800 a-year, and the others an addition of £100 a-year. That plan would require something like £16,000. He trusted the Government would not only give their support to the proposal for increased jurisdiction, but be able to do what the Lord Chancellor did not propose to do last year, and give to a deserving body of men that increase of salary which he considered the work they performed well deserved.

Mr. GREGORY, as a Member of the Committee which had this Bill before it, adhered to the opinion he then formed that the Bill, taken generally, was a useful, he might almost say, a necessary measure. The County Courts were popular with his own Profession, and he knew the great advantage to the public of their institution and extension. But he thought this extension must be kept within reasonable limits. Clause 4 proposed what appeared to be the indefinite extension of the jurisdiction of these Courts; and that, he thought, was objectionable. That extended jurisdiction was proposed to be given not only with respect to Common Law; but to equity. He did not know whether he would object very much to the extension of the Common Law jurisdiction of these Courts, but to the proposed extension of their equity jurisdiction there were grave objections. Equitable jurisdiction involved the powers of injunction, recovery, and administration, and dealt with large masses of property. The power of injunction was a very large power indeed, and involved the immediate action of the Court. Injunctions were issued to meet immediate injuries or supposed injuries to property; and the Court might on the moment, by means of an injunction, and without having even heard the defendant, stop a building, stop the sailing of a ship, stop the recovery of a debt, stop an action, and exercise other powers almost indefinite in their results. Such powers put into the hands of a Local Court might produce the most serious consequences, and any proposal to that effect would require the gravest consideration. And so with regard to the other points to which he had referred. The Courts had not the machinery, or, in many cases, the knowledge or experience, for the exercise of those functions; and the opinion of many of the Judges of the County Courts was against the jurisdiction being extended to them. He should not object to the proposed increase in the salaries of the Judges; but before any such increase was granted the Judges should be required to do their work. It would be found that many of the Judges did not sit for more than four or five or six months in the year. If the number of Judges was diminished and the service was consolidated, and if the power of delegating the functions of the Judges was withdrawn from the Judges, it would be a proper thing to increase the salaries as proposed by the Bill. Delegation was at first intended merely for a temporary purpose; but in some cases the functions of the Judge had been delegated for months and years, and nothing was known of the persons to whom they were delegated. With these alterations, he cordially approved of the Bill.

Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN very much regretted that this Bill should have been opposed by the hon. Member for the City of London (Mr. Alderman Cotton), who, he thought, was hardly justified by the reasons he gave in opposing a measure of great public importance with reference to its action on the Lord Mayor's Court. He ventured to remind him that the Lord Mayor's Court was made for the public, not the public for the Lord Mayor's Court. As to the opposition of the hon. and learned Member for Leeds (Mr. Wheelhouse), that might be taken as a matter of course, seeing that he had opposed every single law reform which had been brought forward since he had held a seat in the House. He (Mr. Osborne Morgan) thought the principle of the Bill altogether right and sound. He believed in the principle of free trade in justice, and they ought to allow a plaintiff to launch his case in any Court which seemed to him best fitted for the purpose. He did not altogether like the idea of drawing a hard-and-fast line, and saying that an action for a certain amount should be tried in a County Court, but if for a large sum it must be tried elsewhere. A case involving only £100 might be more difficult than one involving £1,000. Owing to the indisposition of a friend, he had himself acted on one occasion as a County Court Judge, and it had taken him a whole morning to settle a case involving £2 10*s*., and he now believed his decision was, after all, wrong. A great deal depended on the character of the Judge and also upon the Local Bar; much, also, must depend on the nature of the case to be tried. He hoped, with the aid of this Bill, County Courts would practically take the place of the Assizes. That would be one of the most valuable law reforms that could be conceived. Before that could be done, they must have men who were fit and who would do the work. They must have really good County Court Judges, and the only principle of their selection should be *detur digniori.* The County Courts should not be places of refuge into which stranded "silks" without business, or briefless juniors without experience, might be pitchforked. If they could get a good Judge for £1,500, he did not see why they should pay him £2,000 a-year; but a good Judge was cheap at £2,000 a-year, while a bad Judge was dear at £200. Though they did not require men like Sir George Jessel or Lord Justice James to do County Court work, any more than they wanted razors to cut blocks of wood, it was in the highest degree necessary that they should have for Judges men who would maintain the efficiency of the Courts, and command the confidence of the suitors.

MR. SAMPSON LLOYD thought the commercial community was very much indebted to his hon. Friend the Member for Hull for the great trouble he had taken to obtain an extension of the County Court system. The benefits of enlarged local jurisdiction were very much felt by those who were engaged in business, more particularly by the commercial public, who wanted, not so much elaborately good law, as the sound, sensible, and prompt settlement of the matters in dispute. It was better, in most cases, to get half or two-thirds of one's rights promptly than, after protracted litigation, being dragged from Court to Court, to obtain abstract justice with costs three or four times the amount. The results in these Courts had not only been prompt and economical, but the decisions had been highly satisfactory. It appeared from the statement of Lord Justice Bramwell that he had scarcely any appeals from County Courts. He was not afraid of the proposed extension of jurisdiction, even in equity; and as to salaries, he thoroughly agreed that a Judge should be well paid. Pensions, however, should be given with some caution. The system of superannuation was growing up very largely in the Public Service; and though it was only fair that workmen employed at moderate wages in the Dockyards and other such places in the country should have a provision for old age, he feared that an extension of the pension system to gentlemen earning considerable salaries might lead to very formidable claims. He should not, however, oppose the Bill, but should give it his support on account of the benefits which would be conferred on the community by it.

MR. DILLWYN, while thinking that some extension of the jurisdiction of County Courts was desirable, very much feared that the block of business which was complained of as arising in London would, under the Bill, be transferred to the country, and that the large cases would be taken by preference, and injustice would thus be done to the ordinary class of suitors. He saw no provision in the Bill for remedying that evil. Paying the Judges higher salaries would not enable them to do more work, unless a new or improved machinery were provided, and this Bill did not supply that machinery. He should not, however, oppose the Bill; but he hoped if the Bill was read a second time a considerable interval would be allowed before it went into Committee, to enable hon. Members to consider what Amendments should be introduced.

MR. GATHORNE HARDY said, he would support the second reading of the Bill; but he objected to the section of the same which made it compulsory to bring all cases under £200 into the County Courts. He believed that if a defendant regarded his case as of sufficient importance to be brought into one of the higher Courts he should have power to remove it from the County Court. If an Amendment to that effect were not introduced he should vote against the third reading. He did not think that Lord Justice Bramwell could be cited as an authority on County Court appeals, because the latter would go to Courts of which he had not much cognizance. The block of business in the Courts originated in the Court of Appeal, where cases were more than a year in arrear. He thought it deserved consideration whether Appeal Judges should be allowed to go Circuit.

MR. ANDERSON did not think in practice the difficulty suggested by the hon. Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn) would be found to exist, for the reason that the County Courts in Scotland, that had a much wider jurisdiction, and had, in many cases, a much larger amount of work to do than the English Courts, had never had the complaint made against them that small cases were allowed to stand over in favour of large ones; in fact, the contrary had been the case. His objection to the measure was that it went too far in one direction, and not far enough in another. So far as it was a Bill to extend the jurisdiction of the County Courts it was very good indeed; but it should go further, because to limit the jurisdiction to £200 seemed to him perfectly absurd. The County Court, which was called the Sheriff Court in Scotland, could hear cases on matters affecting personal property to any amount. There was, in fact, no limit at all. Then why, he asked, should they limit the jurisdiction of the English County Courts? The Scotch Courts could even hear real estate cases up to £1,000; and that being the case he did not see why the jurisdiction of the English Courts should continue limited as it was, or even as it was proposed to be by this Bill. But, more than all this, while the Scotch County Courts had this wide jurisdiction they had also a criminal jurisdiction; and instead of the system under which these extensive powers were held by these inferior Courts working badly it worked extremely well. He would recommend the hon. Member for Hull (Mr. Norwood) to extend the jurisdiction much further than he proposed in the Bill, and that he should take the Scotch County Courts for his model. What he objected to in the Bill, however, was that it was sought to extend the salaries of the English County Court Judges to £2,000 a-year; and he objected because those functionaries in Scotland had no such salaries, notwithstanding that they had much wider jurisdiction, and many of them much more continuous work. There was, in most cases, he understood, not continuous work in England, but it existed in Scotland; and in spite of this and the great responsibility of the Judges these men were paid very inferior salaries indeed. Only in one or two cases was there such a thing as a salary of £1,500 a-year. He could not see, therefore, why there should be a very large and a uniform salary in the cases of these English County Court Judges. Surely it was a monstrous and absurd proposal that every Judge, without reference to the importance of the county or the work he had to do, or the responsibility that devolved upon him, should at once have his salary advanced to £2,000 a-year. He hoped the House would not tolerate such a thing. He did not like the pension clause; but he did not think it was so objectionable as the proposal to raise the salaries to £2,000 a-year, and to make that a uniform rate without reference to amount of work or responsibility.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir HARDINGE GIFFARD) said, he had at first intended to allow the second reading of this Bill to take place without any comment from him; but after the speeches which had been made he thought it right to say a few words. He could not at all agree with his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Denbighshire (Mr. Osborne Morgan) as to the practicability of dispensing with the Assize Courts. Indeed, if he thought the scheme proposed was meant to supersede the Assize Courts, and replace them by the County Courts, he would deem it his duty to oppose the second reading. He did not imagine, however, it would do that at all. He was strongly of opinion that the institution of Assize Courts and the bringing down of Judges in proper cases to the country was invaluable. It created a feeling of confidence in the impartial administration of justice, quite independent of local influences, which it would be impossible to obtain in any other way. It would be a calamity to the public if the system of Assizes and Judges going to administer justice in the country were abolished. He was delighted to find, by the admissions on both sides of the House, that the County Court Judges were doing their work well and efficiently, and that the recent appointments had given satisfaction. The extension of the jurisdiction of County Courts was an experimental measure. What was proposed by the hon. and learned Member for Carmarthen Boroughs (Mr. B. Williams) appeared to amount to a circuitous way of turning County Courts into a different form of superior Court, the resort to which the institution of County Courts was intended to avoid. What was desired in County Courts was speedy justice in cases not worth the greater cost of a more elaborate machinery. Still it might well be that an increased limit might be reached without interfering with the efficiency of the County Courts. With reference to the clauses proposing increase of salaries, it must be distinctly understood that if the Bill was read a second time it was with no sort of pledge or even suggestion on the part of the Government that the increase of salaries would be given. The Lord Chancellor would shortly propose a consolidation of County Court Acts, in connection with which this question might be considered. It must not be assumed that, because additional work was created for the Courts, therefore, as a matter of logic and necessity, there must be an increase in the salaries of the Judges. It might be—though he did not say it would—that the re-arrangement would involve an increase in the number of the Judges, and not necessarily an increase in the salaries of the existing Judges; but these were matters it was impossible to speak of on *à priori* grounds. The question must be considered by those who had the responsibility of considering the County Court system as a whole. Therefore, if the change proposed were to be made, it must be made upon its own merits, and upon the distinct understanding that the Government was in no way pledged to an increase of salaries. The only principle he assented to in not resisting the second reading of the Bill was that there was to be an extension, in certain circumstances, of the jurisdiction of these Courts; but how it was to be fenced, guarded, and restricted, was a matter that might be fairly dealt with in Committee.

SIR HENRY JAMES said, that it would be the worst economy, and in no way conducive to the interests of the public, to appoint incompetent persons as County Court Judges, and there was danger of such appointments being made if they went on extending the jurisdiction without raising the salaries. There were already appointments which did not appear to have been made with a due sense of the responsibility involved; and it would become a crying evil if such appointments were multiplied, and if the jurisdiction of the Courts were extended and Judges were selected for political or personal reasons rather than on account of their fitness to discharge the duties. He hoped the Government had not absolutely closed their ears to the appeal that would be made to them in connection with the money clauses of the Bill, but would be prepared to give a sufficient salary to obtain efficient men. He should support the Bill, and hoped the House would read it a second time.

MR. NORWOOD, in reply, desired to remind some of the speakers that the Bill was now presented in the form in which it had been approved by a Select Committee. He ventured to hope that the Government would listen calmly to the appeal that would be made to the Treasury for additions to salaries which, he believed, would, when re-adjustment of Circuits was effected, not amount to more than £15,000 a-year. There might be such a thing as false economy in the administration of justice. He would only add that he was surprised at the opposition offered by the hon. Member for the City of London (Mr. Alderman Cotton).

MR. WHEELHOUSE said, that, with the permission of the House, he would withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

HYPOTHEC ABOLITION (SCOTLAND) BILL—[BILL 34.]

(*Mr. Agnew, Mr. Baillie Hamilton, Sir George Douglas.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. VANS AGNEW, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, he did not propose to occupy the time of the House at any length on this occasion; and he would, in as few words as possible, explain certain changes which occurred in the Bill as printed this Session as compared with the measure of last year. It would be in the recollection of the House that last Session the Bill he had introduced was read a second time, amended, and passed through Committee, and remained in that state waiting for Report until the end of the Session. While it was in that state certain Amendments were given Notice of on the Paper; and in the Bill of the present year he had given effect to the Amendments passed in Committee, and he had also added to the measure as much of the Amendments that were moved upon Report as he could accept. Perhaps he should best save the time of the House by mentioning these particulars in which the Bill had been changed from what it was last year. On Clause 1 there was an Amendment by the hon. and gallant Member for Kincardineshire (General Sir George Balfour). The hon. and gallant Member wished to change the date at which the Act would come into force. At the end of the 1st clause, the wording of the Bill as originally introduced was "the passing of the Act," and the word "commencement" was afterwards substituted by the Lord Advocate; but the right hon. and learned Gentleman had informed him that he had no objection to return to the former word to suit the views of the hon. and gallant Member for Kincardineshire. Then, in the 2nd clause, at the bottom of the first page, there was a provision for 14 days' notice being given of action being taken before the Sheriff; and this Amendment that the hon. Member for Wigton Burghs (Mr. Mark Stewart) and several other Members had given Notice of he had incorporated in the Bill. There was another Amendment by the hon. and gallant Member for Kincardineshire the greater part of which he had adopted, the only change in it being in line 23. In the Amendment given notice of the words "all just claims" occurred; and he had substituted the word "legal" for the word "just," the former being the less likely to give rise to differences of interpretation. In the latter part of that clause he had put in an Amendment of which he had given Notice on Report, carrying out the intention of an Amendment of his hon. and gallant Friend; and he considered the words he had introduced more comprehensive than those of his hon. and gallant Friend. These were the only alterations he had made in the Bill. The principle of the measure was the same as that of the Bill of last year; and his desire was to put it before the House so that they might agree to the second reading, and that the matter might be taken up at the point where it was left last Session. He would not occupy the time of the House by repeating any of the arguments he had used last year, because the subject had been thoroughly thrashed out, and it would be a waste of time to go over them. He had merely to add that last Session the Bill was read a second time by 204 votes against 77, or a majority of 127; and he wished particularly to point out to the House that in the division 49 Scotch Members took part, of whom 47 voted in favour of the second reading, only two hon. Gentlemen representing Scotch constituencies voting against it. This was a matter which ought to weigh with Members of the House, showing, as it did, how unanimously in favour of the Bill the Scotch Representatives were. He would not occupy any more time by dwelling on the subject, but would simply move that the Bill be read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Vans Agnew.*)

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL said, that he had on former occasions expressed considerable misgivings with regard to the policy of passing the measure, especially seeing that it touched only one branch of the subject—namely, the question of rural hypothec in Scotland, leaving untouched the cognate questions of the Law of Distress in England and urban hypothec in Scotland. He had expressed his misgivings last year, and what had since happened had certainly not reduced those misgivings. His position was this—he represented an urban constituency, and a constituency that consisted of towns situated in rural districts, amongst the inhabitants of which were many merchants, who had large dealings with the farmers and with the rural people of the neighbourhood. Therefore, if it were the case that there was a grievance felt by the traders of Scotland, it would be in those towns that he represented; and feeling, as he did, that the opinion and experience of practical men must be of much greater value than his own, he had repeatedly declared in public, and he had made it known to his constituents, that, though he, personally, had great doubt as to the advisability of passing the Bill, still, if he saw a strong feeling amongst his constituents in favour of the measure, he should feel himself bound to withdraw his opposition. But he had had no representations showing that his constituents were in favour of the proposed change in the law; and he was, therefore, bound to believe that there was no strong feeling on the subject among them. Indeed, his experience led him more and more to believe what he had always expected—that though the Bill had the reputation of being very generally approved in Scotland, the fact was that it was agitated and got up only by large and wealthy farmers, who were anxious, as far as possible, to diminish the competition of poorer men. He believed that

that was a fact, and that other people who had been silent really knew very little about the effect of the Bill. He had expressed these opinions before, and he now declared that he did not withdraw them. Another consideration had presented itself before his mind with considerable force since this matter was last discussed, and which made him very unwilling to see the Bill passed. They knew that in the course of last year the subject of agricultural distress had occupied the attention of the country, and had created some considerable anxiety; and they knew that a Royal Commission was sitting on the subject. Men of great experience had inquired into the matter, and some hon. Gentlemen had visited America for the purpose of obtaining information. He himself had also visited America, and had paid considerable attention to the subject; and he had formed opinions upon the subject which might mature when the Committee reported. They were opinions subject to correction; but he had been led to entertain them, because, like a great many other people, though very far from wishing to abolish farming on a large scale, still he was of opinion that there was great room for a class of small farms in the country. Scientific men had expressed the opinion that much good might be effected by splitting up large farms into small plots, as in America, and that milk, eggs, butter, and such things, which were at present imported from abroad, could be easily produced at home. A great many millions had been spent in getting eggs from France, butter from Normandy, and agricultural supplies from other places. What, he asked, was the principal obstacle to small farms? What was the obstacle to their establishment as an experiment? He believed it was this—that landlords and landlords' agents found the difficulty of dealing with their tenants' increase in consequence of their insolvency, and matters of that kind. A landlord, who had a farm from which he got £800 or £1,000 a-year, preferred to deal with a large and solvent tenant, as he was then enabled to travel about and enjoy himself. If he were to split up that farm into eight or ten or a dozen farms his difficulties would be very much increased. He did not like to make the experiment, even though it might be profitable in the end. It appeared to him (Sir George Campbell) that the difficulty of dealing with small farms would be very much increased if this system of hypothec were abolished, because, in that case, a landlord would not be dealing with one rich man, but a dozen poor men. He would have to see that his tenants were solvent, and take steps to see whether they had the means of paying their rents. He thought the law was favourable to small farms, and that its abolition would be a disadvantage to them, and make it less likely than it was at present that landlords would split up their estates into small holdings. For these reasons it was that, though he did not take on himself to oppose the Bill, he expressed the doubts he entertained as to the advisability of its becoming law.

MR. ORR-EWING said, that notwithstanding the arguments of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy Burghs (Sir George Campbell), whose constituents, as he said, not being agricultural, were not interested in the Bill, he still hoped the House would agree to the second reading. If the hon. Gentleman had had the honour of being elected for Dumbarton in 1868, he would then have found that the constituency would have been unanimously in favour of this Bill; and, therefore, his opinion would have been quite different from what it was now. If the hon. Member doubted that, he thought he would find it understood in the Burghs of Kirkcaldy. If the hon. Member thought it to his interest in that burgh to introduce urban hypothec, he ought to have the courage of his opinions, and move an Amendment. He was quite sure that if he did so he would not be returned again. The fact was there were two kinds of property, and in juxtaposition; and there could be no divided feeling in reference to the Law of Hypothec. The fact was, to abolish urban hypothec would be to injure the great body of householders, and render property less valuable in towns and cities. But the reverse was the case in counties. The unanimous feeling among the farmers of Scotland was that the present law should be abolished. It was thought by them to be injurious to their interests, in bringing people to compete with them who knew very little of farming, and increased the rents in consequence. He had to say that this was a hardship, and if ever there was a time when Parliament should lessen the burdens of the farmers it was the present moment. If the Scotch farmers did not make such an outcry as their friends on the other side of the Channel, he could assure the House that they had suffered to as great an extent as their brethren in Ireland. This was a question which had been long before the House, and which had been almost carried several times. Last year, but for the interference with Business in that House, it would have passed, and he hoped Her Majesty's Government would give it their hearty support. As being a measure generally demanded by the tenantry of Scotland, there could be no better evidence than that last year 47 Scotch Members supported the second reading. When he remembered that the feeling was so unanimous, although he was not prepared to say that the abolition of hypothec had the concurrence of English Members, he hoped English Members would give it their hearty support.

General Sir GEORGE BALFOUR said, the time afforded for discussing this great question—for such it was in the opinion of Scotch farmers—was so curtailed that any remarks Scotch Members might wish to make must unavoidably be brief. He would, therefore, merely observe that when he took up the question of hypothec his object was to effect the abolition of an unjust law, injurious to the public welfare, and by its removal reconcile the interests of farmers and landlords; and he had pursued that object with a single eye to the common good. He thought nothing could be more injurious to the well-being of the country than the continuance of the feeling which prevailed in the minds of farmers and others connected with the cultivation of the soil of Scotland, and which must continue to exist while this measure remained to be dealt with. He could have wished to have had the Bill in the simple form in which he himself had introduced it—namely, with one clause simply abolishing hypothec, leaving the adjustment of differences between the landlords and tenants to the landlords and tenants themselves. His object in now rising, therefore, was not to detain the House in coming to a decision—at all events, not to make a long speech, so that other Members might not be precluded from saying a few words—but to urge Members from the counties of Scotland to accede to the Bill in its present form, leaving any Amendments which might be proposed to be made in Committee. He must, however, recognize the good service done by the hon. Member for Wigtonshire in trying to improve the Bill as originally proposed, and to recognize the fact of important Amendments having been adopted, which he (Sir George Balfour) had proposed. Still, he must say that simple abolition of a bad law was, in his opinion, the best form. Even in its present defective form he thought the Bill capable of benefiting the farmers of Scotland very greatly. There could be no doubt that the Amendments might be useful in effecting one object—that more capital would be introduced into the cultivation of the land than had hitherto been. He thought the Law of Hypothec prevented capital from being invested, and by creating security in the minds of landlords as to their rent of the land, and by combining other interests in proper stocking and better cultivation, they might expect new openings for capital by persons possessed of it having freedom of action in consequence of the abolition of the Law of Hypothec. With regard to the remarks of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy Burghs (Sir George Campbell), he very much regretted to find one who represented an urban constituency criticize the agricultural measure in the way he had done, and he hoped the House would not act upon the statements he had made. On the grounds stated he should support the measure, and ask the House to accord it a second reading.

Lord ELCHO observed that the hon. and gallant Member who had just sat down was himself inclined to legislate on the subject last year, or the year before, and brought in a Bill which did not deal with agricultural hypothec only, but with urban hypothec also.

General Sir GEORGE BALFOUR: The noble Lord is mistaken. My Bill, as brought before the House, was simply with regard to agricultural hypothec. It was originally intended to apply to urban hypothec; but that was taken out.

Lord ELCHO: Exactly so; the first Bill that the hon. and gallant Gentleman brought in was, as he (Lord Elcho) had stated, intended to deal with both subjects, agricultural and urban; but after a time the hon. and gallant General withdrew the Bill, and substituted another Bill dealing only with agricultural subjects. It would, he supposed, be a Breach of Privilege to ask the hon. and gallant Gentleman what pressure had been brought to bear upon him in order to induce him to give up the broad principle which he had first adopted. That, however, struck him as an apposite question to put to his hon. and gallant Friend. He had no wish to take up the general question, for it had been his lot to speak more than once upon the subject, and last year he had unburdened his soul fully. Certainly, he had no wish to talk the subject out—far from it—and he had not risen for that purpose. Last year he had moved an Amendment; but that Amendment was not directed against the principle of the Bill, but simply against the way in which the question was dealt with, and affirming certain truisms which never had been controverted. Those truisms were as follows:—1st, That the Law of Hypothec was the equivalent of the English and Irish Law of Distress; 2nd, that the principle of preference given by the Law of Hypothec, whether it be to the owner of houses or land, was a principle that pervaded the Commercial as well as the Land Law of this country; 3rd, that the Law of Hypothec for the rent accruing or the rent accrued was the law of every civilized country in Europe, as well as of England and Ireland, and also of America, Wurtemburg being the only civilized country in which the law did not apply; 4th, that under this law, as stated by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy Burghs (Sir George Campbell) and others, small farmers had risen to be large tenants, and that had proved beneficial to the agriculture of Scotland; and, lastly, that the subject, if dealt with at all, should be dealt with as a whole, the urban hypothec being treated as well as agricultural, and the Law of Distress in England and Ireland, as well as the Law of Hypothec in Scotland. Such was the substance of his Resolution. What happened? He failed to carry it. For the first time, a Conservative Government had dealt with this question in the way which they had done. The Lord Advocate, if he might use the expression, went the whole hog. The Lord Advocate, however, although he converted himself, failed to carry along with him the majority of his Government, for on that occasion four Members of the Government voted with him and nine against the Resolution. He ventured think that this question should be dealt with in a statesmanlike, and not in a perfunctory, manner. The Bill was read a second time. No doubt the Home Secretary voted with him; but he was very much inclined to believe that the Home Secretary at the time did not know what the Law of Hypothec was. He perhaps considered it a barbarous law as compared with the Law of Distress; but, be that as it might, the conversion of the Lord Advocate and the Government led to a successful division, and the Bill was carried in its second reading. But there was very soon a Nemesis awaiting upon the Lord Advocate and the Government. Within a few weeks afterwards a Gentleman who represented an Irish constituency moved a Resolution against the Law of Distress, proposing that that law should be abolished. Now, the Mover had referred naturally to what had taken place in regard to the Law of Hypothec; and how did he strengthen his position as to the removal of the Law of Distress? By proving that the Law of Hypothec, which the House of Commons had by its vote abolished—that was to say, on the representation of the Lord Advocate—was a milder law and more limited in its operation than the Law of Distress. The Mover pointed out, in favourable contrast to the Law of Distress, that the Law of Hypothec was limited to the year's crop and rent. So much for the Mover. What course did the Government take? Their Law Officer said that it was a bold proposal—a strong proposition—to abolish this law in the United Kingdom. It was, he said, one of the oldest laws, a law which worked in many ways in the interest of the tenant, and to abolish it would be injurious to the tenant. In short, ejectment would be necessary as an expedient if it were abolished, and the result of its abolition would be the payment of rent in advance. In fact, no case had been made out for abolition. That was the result of the discussion on the Law of Distress, which the Mover of the Resolution, who wished to abolish it, said was a much harsher law than the Law of Hypothec. His hon. Friend behind him (Mr. Clare Read), who voted for the abolition of the Law of Hypothec, had said that he supported the Law of Distress because it was so interwoven with our agricultural system that its repeal would be detrimental both to landlords and tenants. He would ask his hon. Friend—whom they were glad to see returned in safety across the Atlantic—whether the Law of Hypothec was not also interwoven with our agricultural system? What had the Chancellor of the Exchequer said on the Law of Distress? Speaking for the Government, he said that the question was one on which, at the first blush, they could not seem to legislate, because it touched so many interests that it would require very great deliberation. There was no necessity, in his mind, for abolishing the law, because, he said, there were points in the Law of Distress which demanded consideration. A division took place, and with what result? That all the Members of the Government, those who had voted with him (Lord Elcho), and those who voted for the abolition of the Law of Hypothec alike, and 26 Conservative Members who had voted for the repeal of hypothec, all voted for the maintenance of distress—that was to say, of a more partial and limited law. Now, what was the reason of this? The reason was given by the Lord Advocate and his hon. Friend (Mr. Vans Agnew). Simply political expediency. The Lord Advocate had given them his reason for the action of the Government—that not only were the people of Scotland almost unanimous—both tenants and landlords—in favour of the abolition of hypothec, but that the Representatives of the people in that House were practically unanimous on the point. He (Lord Elcho) thought they mistook the feeling of the people of Scotland on the point. He did not think those statements represented the real feeling of the masses of the people of Scotland. Now, his hon. Friend had said that when the tenants of England demanded the abolition of the Law of Distress, as the people of Scotland had demanded the abolition of the Law of Hypothec, he would be willing to vote for it. The argument, then, was this—that in the United Kingdom there were two distinct laws—one for one part of the country, and another for another part. They were identical, with this difference—that the one they desired to abolish was less harsh than the other. The results were the same throughout the United Kingdom, except in Ireland, where the tenure of land was different. Therefore, in a country like the United Kingdom, where, for reasons best known to themselves, the majority of the Representatives of one of the Kingdoms held that this law ought to be abolished, it must then be abolished, not in one part but another. Where would such doctrines lead them to? How about Ireland? How as to the Irish demands for fixity of tenure, reduced rent, and the like? How as to no rent in Ireland, which was the last phase of the Irish Land Question? How as to the Home Rule? If they legislated simply, not on the merits or demerits of a question, but on its applicability or non-applicability to a particular part of the country, how could they meet the demands of the Irish Members with such an argument in their mouths, doing away with the Law of Hypothec and maintaining the Law of Distress? He maintained that it was not statesmanlike. He had stopped the progress of this Bill last year, and he was not ashamed of having done so. He did so, because he thought it desirable that the Conservative Government should have time to consider before the next Session of Parliament how they were to deal with this question, and whether they were to deal with this question, and whether they would deal with it in a statesmanlike way. If the law was wrong in Scotland it was equally wrong in England and Ireland; and if it were wrong in regard to land here it was equally wrong throughout the civilized world. If it were wrong with regard to private and public interests, let them repeal it throughout the Three Kingdoms. If it were in principle sound, and the law required a few amendments, then he would say amend it, and get rid of this term which had given a bad pre-eminence to the Scottish law. But, as a Member of that House, he entered his protest against legislating on a question of that kind—which they were told, on the best authority, was interwoven with their whole system of land tenure in England, Ireland, and Scotland—in the way in which Her Majesty's Government had dealt with it. Now, it was for the Government to consider what course they would take; and he was inclined to think that, seeing the condition of the question in Ireland, and that the question would be brought before the Royal Commission, that it would be a much wiser, a more natural, and a more statesmanlike way of dealing with the subject not to pass the Bill this year, but to wait till they got the Report of the Commission, and then consider, with that Report in view, whether they would repeal this law, or modify it and make it equal for the Three Kingdoms. He did not speak of the landlords' interest in this question—if the sun would only shine they could take care of themselves. He did not think they would suffer. He thought it more likely that the tenants would suffer. This was a matter of business. It was all very well to read of new leases given by men who had come recently to their property nominally doing away with hypothec; but he thought it would be found that those leases contained other clauses which gave, perhaps, better security to the landlord than the Law of Hypothec as it stood. At any rate, by fore-renting, by quarterly payments, by caution, and by other means and expedients, a landlord could protect himself, if he chose. ["Hear, hear!"] Hon. Members who cheered ought to abolish distress in England as well as in Scotland. All he asked was that they should deal with this law in a statesmanlike manner, applicable to the whole Kingdom. In any case, he did not expect that those who agitated this question would derive from it the benefits they expected, for if the Law of Hypothec were abolished the landlord would only make up for his want of security by increasing the rate.

LORD COLIN CAMPBELL said, he would detain the House only a very short time. He quite agreed that the subject had been thrashed out, and the arguments worn threadbare; but he was, on that account, all the more astonished to hear the objection, with regard to small farmers, urged by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy. That was an argument, he believed, which was brought forward on a previous occasion by the noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho); but as he represented a constituency noted for the prodigious size of the farms, it had appeared to him the noble Lord reflected the opinions of himself and not of that constituency. The noble Lord came down to the House, and said that there were certain truisms which he ventured to lay before the House last year, and not one of which was repudiated. He must say he was astonished that the noble Lord should make such a statement when, as a matter of fact, no sooner had he sat down, than the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate got up and repudiated every single one of the propositions which the noble Lord had laid before the House. He would, however, venture to affirm one truism which might commend itself to the attention of the noble Lord, and that was that the Law of Hypothec might be rigidly defined. It was a law which offered to the landlord a premium for choosing the highest bidders and the worst farmers that the whole community could furnish. He knew that the subject had been confused by false analogies. The Lord Advocate himself had exposed some of these. The law had been compared to the lien of a shipowner on the cargo. But that was a totally distinct case, for there they had the property not passing out of the hands of the shipowner; whereas, in the case of hypothec, before the sequestration the crops never came into the hands of the landlord. As to the argument of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell), with regard to small farms, he believed it had been refuted over and over again, and the refutation was to be found in the most ample form in the evidence given before the various Committees which had inquired into the question. It was not the small farmers who required the protection of the law, but the landlords who encouraged not the small farmers, but that much larger class of men who were more distinguished by their love of speculation than by their knowledge of agriculture. It was not the men who had risen from the position of ploughmen or agricultural labourers who required the protection of this law. They were generally men who, by energy, foresight, thrift, and care had been enabled to obtain possession of a farm, and who had strictly calculated the means by which they could work it with profit to themselves and to the community at large.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. WATSON): Sir, I have no intention to occupy the time of the House for any considerable period in asking them to read the

Bill a second time, and I should not have had anything to say but for the observations which have fallen from the noble Lord below the Gangway (Lord Elcho). The noble Lord has kindly referred to me as a "convert;" but I should like to be informed to what I am a convert, and when I was converted. I stated to the House last year that I did not hesitate to say that it had all along been my opinion that no case had been made out for the Law of Hypothec, and no good argument adduced for its maintenance. I have heard a good deal upon the subject, and have the greatest possible satisfaction in informing the noble Lord that though listening attentively and carefully, and with the full consideration which is due to arguments from the noble Lord, I have never felt in the slightest terror of conversion. The noble Lord has also referred to a statement of mine in regard to rack rents in Scotland. I wish he had either remained long enough in the House to hear what I had to say on the subject, or had perused my former speech in the report of *Hansard*, because the hon. Member for Banffshire (Mr. R. W. Duff) gave me an opportunity to explain that statement. What I said was, that I did not mean that the land was rented at an extortionate rate, but that it was generally rented at its full market value. To that opinion I still adhere, and I do not believe that in this matter the agriculturists of Scotland stand in the same position as their brethren in England. I quite admit that the questions of distress and hypothec are intimately bound up with the Land Laws of the country, and I also believe that you should not touch any portion of those Land Laws without full and due consideration; but, on the other hand, I dispute the proposition that, so far as Scotland is concerned, the question of hypothec has not undergone full consideration. That is not so, however, with the Law of Distress, and I did not understand that many of those who voted in the majority on the last occasion did so on the ground that the Law of Distress ought to be maintained, but that inquiry should be made in the matter; and that I understood to be the meaning of the words cited by the noble Lord. I farther say confidently that this question has been finally considered by landlords and tenants in relation to the Land Laws of Scotland, and that the conclusion they have come to is, I will not say absolutely, but practically, a unanimous conclusion — namely, that the Law of Hypothec may be safely eliminated from our system. That conclusion having been arrived at, I do not think this House should interpose between a wish for legislation in this direction, because it is right and proper for other countries to overhaul their systems of Land Laws and make up their minds on the subject before we obtain any alterations. I will not follow the arguments of the noble Lord addressed to hon. Members below the opposite Gangway; but with regard to the old objection that urban hypothec is not also dealt with in this Bill, the law in that case differs in most vital respects from the Law of Agricultural Hypothec. It is not considered an expedient or a necessary condition of things in every country that everybody should have a farm; but it is a necessary condition of things in Scotland, owing to our law against vagrancy. It is necessary that every person shall have a house over his head who does not mean to be either in the workhouse or the police station. Accordingly, I believe there are a large number of people who are able to secure by means of the Law of Hypothec that they may become lessees of a house, who, but for that law, would be driven to a very disagreeable alternative; but to speak of the two things as depending on the same principle is altogether a mistake. I say nothing of that particular law. It may demand investigation; but it differs in principle from the Law of Agricultural Hypothec.

Mr. R. W. DUFF said, he would support the second reading of the Bill; but he appealed to the Lord Advocate to give his particular attention, before the House went into Committee on the Bill, to the 2nd clause. With the exception, perhaps, of the noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire (Lord Elcho), and the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell), he believed that there existed on the part of Scotch Members a general wish to abolish the Law of Hypothec in Scotland; but in doing that he understood the position of the landlords to be exactly the same as that of seed merchants, manure merchants, blacksmiths, or tradesmen. It seemed to him that they did not want to put the landlord in any other position. That, he understood, was the general desire. But he would like the Lord Advocate to tell him this—if a man entered into an agreement with a tenant, and made it part of the bargain that the tenant should forfeit his right if he got into arrears for 12 months, he had no means of carrying out that agreement—he meant no summary means. He wanted the learned Lord to give his attention to that particular point, as it was a matter which must be dealt with by some Scotch law. He simply wished to see the landlord put in his proper position in the matter, and, as he understood the 2nd clause of the Bill, it would not do so. He accordingly appealed to the Lord Advocate to put the law in such a state that if two parties entered into an equitable agreement they might be able to carry it out, so that when a tenant got into arrears a landlord should have a summary means of getting rid of him according to his agreement.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY thought the law was sufficiently explicit on the point referred to by the hon. Member. He thought the Bill was conciderably improved since it was presented last Session. There was only one point to which he wished to refer, and to call the attention of the Lord Advocate. He thought it was quite clear—and if it was so the Bill would have his best support—that when a landlord ejected a tenant he would be bound to pay him for the crops which were on the ground. He understood that that was the object of the right hon. and learned Gentleman; and he believed that if that was provided the Bill would be very much in accordance with the wishes of the people of Scotland.

SIR GRAHAM MONTGOMERY thought the present was the best Bill on Hypothec which he had seen. It had been very much improved since it had come before the House on a previous occasion. He had never been in favour of the abolition of the Law of Hypothec himself; and he only wished to say that he very much feared that if the Bill became law the tenants in Scotland would not derive that benefit from it they expected.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Tuesday* next.

BLIND AND DEAF MUTE CHILDREN BILL—[BILL 41.]

(*Mr. Wheelhouse, Mr. Montague Scott, Mr. Benjamin Williams.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Wheelhouse.*)

MR. MONK said, the Amendments made in the Bill of last year were not embodied in the Bill now submitted. If they were to be re-introduced he would not oppose the Bill.

MAJOR NOLAN had no objection to the Bill as it stood, but must oppose it if the Amendments were to be inserted.

It being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (DISTRICT COURTS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. JOSEPH COWEN, Bill to amend and extend the Supreme Court of Judicature Acts 1873 and 1875, and to make provisions for the better Local Administration of Justice in England, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. JOSEPH COWEN, Mr. RIPLEY, Mr. ROWLEY HILL, and Mr. EUSTACE SMITH.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 87.]

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. HOLT, Bill to amend the Law relating to Cruelty to Animals, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. HOLT, Mr. ASHLEY, Mr. HARDCASTLE, Sir EARDLEY WILMOT, and Mr. CHARLES WILSON.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 88.]

MIDDLESEX LAND REGISTRY BILL.

On Motion of Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN, Bill to improve the constitution and extend the district of the Middlesex Land Registry, and to amend the Law relating to the registration and transfer of land in Middlesex and the Metropolis, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN, Mr. GREGORY, and Sir SYDNEY WATERLOW.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 89.]

SOUTH WESTERN (OF LONDON) DISTRICT POST OFFICE BILL.

On Motion of Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON, Bill to enable Her Majesty's Postmaster General to enlarge and acquire a site for the South Western (of London) District Post Office, *ordered* to be brought in by Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON and Lord JOHN MANNERS.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 90.]

DRAINAGE AND IMPROVEMENT OF LANDS (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

On Motion of Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order under "The Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) Act, 1863," and the Acts amending the same, *ordered* to be brought in by Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON and Mr. JAMES LOWTHER.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 91.]

PATENTS FOR INVENTIONS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. ANDERSON, Bill to amend the Law of Patents for Inventions, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. ANDERSON, Mr. MUNDELLA, Mr. DALRYMPLE, and Mr. ALEXANDER BROWN.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 92.]

House adjourned at ten minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 26*th February*, 1880.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Ancient Monuments * (20); Artizans Dwellings Act (1868) Amendment Act (1879) Amendment * (21).

Second Reading—Local Courts of Bankruptcy (Ireland) * (11).

Select Committee — Employers Liability * (4), *nominated.*

Third Reading—Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement (Scotland) Act (1875) Amendment * (8); Seeds (Ireland) (18), and *passed.*

SEEDS (IRELAND) BILL—(Nos. 10, 18.)

(*The Lord President.*)

THIRD READING.

Order of the Day for the Third Reading, read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3^a."—(*The Lord President.*)

LORD MONTEAGLE wished to make a few remarks upon this measure, which was one of very great importance to his country. The object of the Bill was, as the House was aware, to enable the Government to lend money to Boards of Guardians, who, in turn, were to make advances for the purchase of seed potatoes and other seeds to the small farmers who could not afford to buy the seed for themselves. There could be no doubt as to the advisability, owing to the great scarcity of seed in the country, of advancing seed to the tenant occupiers who required it; but the difficulty which arose was, whether the advance should be made in money or in seed? If there was money, seed would, undoubtedly, come into the country; but then the question which had to be considered was, whether there was such a great want of money amongst the tenant occupiers as to justify the Government making an especial arrangement of this nature? There could be no doubt whatever that amongst the small farmers in many parts of Ireland there was a great want of money, and that many farmers could not buy seed and pay for it in ready cash; and he was of opinion that Her Majesty's Government deserved the thanks of everyone connected with Ireland for adopting the Bill which had been brought in in the other House of Parliament with the object of meeting the want. But when he came to consider the provisions of the Bill he could not but fear there was a certain amount of danger in carrying them out, and he could not help asking the Government if they could not in any way guard against the danger? Under the Bill loans were to be advanced to the Boards of Guardians of electoral divisions, and the Boards of Guardians would make advances to the small farmers. He wished to know if the Government had pointed out the condition under which the money would be advanced by the Boards of Guardians to the small farmers? He had talked to several persons in Ireland on the subject, and from what he had been informed was inclined to think there was a general idea that the price of seed might not be recovered at all by the Boards of Guardians from the small farmers. There were, undoubtedly, under the Bill powers for the recovery of the seed rate from the ordinary poor's rate; but he feared that unless some notice was taken of the conditions under which the loan was obtained the rate would not be recovered at all in the same manner as the ordinary poor's rate, and that the people might expect, and the Boards of Guardians might expect also, that as to anything that might be advanced by the Government they would not care much as to its ever being repaid. He very much doubted whether that was the view which was entertained by Her Majesty's

Government; and, therefore, he begged to ask the noble Duke the Lord President of the Council whether the danger which he feared was a real one?

The Duke of RICHMOND and GORDON said, the noble Lord had given him no Notice of the Question, and if the noble Lord had done so he should have been better able to have given him a satisfactory answer upon the subject to which he had called attention. As he understood, the noble Lord wished to know whether the provisions contained in the Bill would be brought distinctly under the notice of Boards of Guardians? All he could say was that the Boards of Guardians would have full notice of the Bill, and the provisions of the measure would be set before them. The Bill enabled Boards of Guardians to advance seed to persons who applied, and were entitled to apply, for it, and the loans were not intended as a gift, but would have to be repaid in the manner provided.

Lord MONTEAGLE said, the noble Duke had not quite understood him, and he wished to explain the point he had referred to. One of the clauses of the Bill provided that the Boards of Guardians might apply for loans to purchase seed subject to certain conditions, and one of the conditions was the limitation which was put upon the valuation of the occupiers who got the loans. The repayment of the loans was to be made by the Boards of Guardians in two equal instalments, and the specified time for the payment of the first instalment was 1881, the second to be paid at a later date. But there was no time specified for the re-payment of the loans advanced to the occupiers by the Boards of Guardians. He, therefore, feared that the occupiers might think that as the loans were not to be repaid to the Boards of Guardians in any specified time they were not called upon to repay them; and he thought that the matter ought to be called to the notice of the Boards of Guardians, who should not grant loans without carefully considering whether they would be able to recover the money from the occupiers.

The Duke of RICHMOND and GORDON said, the point to which the noble Lord referred did not come within the scope of the Bill, but was a matter for the consideration of the Boards of Guardians themselves.

Lord MONTEAGLE said, his point was to ask the Irish Government, when issuing instructions to Boards of Guardians, to call their attention to the liability they incurred; because, otherwise, they might or might not realize the full extent of their liabilities.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 3^a accordingly, with the Amendments, and *passed,* and sent to the Commons.

ARMY — THE AUXILIARY FORCES — THE EASTER MONDAY VOLUNTEER REVIEW.

ADDRESS FOR A PAPER.

Lord CAMPBELL, in moving for the despatch of Sir Hope Grant on Easter Monday Volunteer Reviews, said, he did not at all wish to urge Her Majesty's Government to re-consider any step they might have now resolved upon. If they had formed a compact with the Brighton Corporation to hold a field day at the town the Corporation represented upon Easter Monday, there would be but one wish among the friends of the Auxiliary Forces—namely, to secure the best results, and, as far as possible, avert the inconveniences by which such occasions had been formerly attended. With a view to so desirable an object, the letter of Sir Hope Grant ought now to be exhibited. It was certain to suggest lessons, which everyone who had in his charge a brigade, a regiment, or even a company, ought to keep before him. The noble Viscount the Under Secretary, with singular inaccuracy, had recently adverted to it as being 12 years old. It belonged to the year 1871. It was, therefore, based upon the military lessons which the great campaigns of 1870 had afforded. Nothing had occurred in connection with the Volunteer Force, or Brighton, or the Easter Holidays, to make it less applicable now than at the time when it was issued. He could not but take the present opportunity of touching on an erroneous view which seemed to linger at the War Office, and which, the other day, the Forms of the House prevented him from controverting. It was assumed by the noble Viscount the Under Secretary that the Metropolitan commanders of the Volunteer Force ought to dictate the time and place of annual field days, and that the Government had no function except to act on their conclusions. No doubt, that was the tendency of Governments; but, for the clearest reasons, it ought not to be so. In the first place, the Metropolitan commanders had no authority to represent battalions in the country. Besides that, the Force was not gratuitous; the public spent £500,000 on it annually, which gave an obvious right to the Executive to regulate its movements. If, however, the House more specially considered the larger field days, the grounds of interference were much stronger. They could not exist without co-operation from the Government. The divisional commanders, many brigadiers, and all the brigade-majors were furnished by the State; and thus the State had nothing but its own judgment to defer to, as to the conditions it imposed, when these advantages were granted. Whatever time or place it disapproved it could immediately prohibit. With these remarks, he would move for the despatch of Sir Hope Grant, as he was quite unable to anticipate objections to producing it.

Moved, That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for Copy of the Despatch of General Sir Hope Grant on the character of Volunteer Easter Monday field days.—(*The Lord Campbell.*)

VISCOUNT BURY reminded the noble Lord that, as to the initiation of these reviews, from the earliest days of the Volunteer movement the Government had allowed the initiative as to the place of meeting and the character of the reviews to rest with the Volunteers themselves. The Regulations on this subject provided that if any force exceeding in the aggregate 2,000 men wished to assemble for exercise, application as to these should be made through the Lords Lieutenant, the nature of the intended reviews to be stated at the same time. The Government had no option but to carry out the Regulations, leaving the initiation and the questions as to the place of meeting and the nature of the manœuvres to the Volunteers themselves. What the War Office had to do in the matter was perfectly plain. They had first to satisfy themselves that the illustrious Duke at the head of the Army entertained no insuperable objections from a military point of view to the proposed field day; also to ascertain that he could, consistently with the other military requirements, detail a competent officer to conduct the manœuvres, and that he had at his disposal a staff of competent military officers to carry out the commanding officer's orders. There the responsibility of the War Office in the matter ceased. He must express his surprise that the noble Lord should have moved for one despatch only, and not for the entire series of despatches written by the gallant officers who had commanded at other reviews since the inauguration of the Volunteer Force. The omission was the more remarkable, as the despatch in question was the only one of an aspect unfavourable to the Volunteers, whereas the others all spoke in high terms of their efficiency. Among others who had so reported of the Force were Sir James Scarlett, Lord William Paulet, Sir Robert Walpole, Sir Robert Garrett, General McCleverty, Sir George Buller, Sir George Ellis, Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, and others. Indeed, Sir Hope Grant himself had spoken in 1869 of the excellent discipline of the Force on occasion of the field day at Dover. He now wished to say a word as a Metropolitan commanding officer of some 20 years' standing. The noble Lord who had moved for Sir Hope Grant's despatch had suddenly assumed the attitude of a severe critic of the Volunteer movement, and the other day had spoken of certain fiascoes which he declared had occurred on former Easter Monday field days, as if anticipating some such result on Easter Monday next, and he referred in particular to the meeting of 1869 at Dover, and that of 1871 at Brighton. Now, as to the field day at Dover, the day turned out so exceedingly wet that the review was postponed and the men dismissed. Now, what was likely to be the result of setting from 20,000 to 25,000 Volunteers loose in a garrison town with nothing to do and nowhere to go to for shelter but to the public-houses? The alacrity and discipline, however, which the men showed in getting under arms again for the review when, His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge having arrived, the bugle was sounded, were in themselves a sufficient answer to the criticisms of the noble Lord; and Sir Hope Grant himself complimented them on their conduct. The noble Lord had moved for Sir Hope Grant's despatch of 1871; but why move for that unfavourable despatch and say nothing about the favourable one from the same authority, or the many favourable reports of other commanding officers at Easter Monday reviews held both previously and subsequently? To grant what the noble Lord asked for—a single despatch which was unfavourable out of a bundle of despatches which were favourable—nine years after the decision of Sir Hope Grant had been reversed by the concurrent testimony of many other officers, would be to cast what would certainly be taken as a slur, and a very undeserved slur, on a body which since the time referred to had increased very much in numbers, and still more in efficiency, and which at the present moment added to the defensive force of the country 197,400 efficient men. The despatch which the noble Lord asked for had, like others, been published *in extenso* in *The Volunteer Service Gazette*, and, indeed, in nearly all the newspapers of the day, so that the noble Lord could hardly require it for his own information, and the only purpose it could serve seemed to be to cast a slur upon the Volunteer Force. In these circumstances, the House would support the Government in declining to produce the despatch. [The noble Viscount subsequently read the titles of the several despatches as they appeared in *The Volunteer Service Gazette* of February 3, 1872.]

LORD CAMPBELL said, that if no other noble Lord was going to address the House, since he had made a Motion which the Government resisted, he was bound to offer a few words in answer to them. The noble Viscount had expatiated widely upon topics which did not bear upon the question of producing the despatch. He had referred to a certain Regulation of the Volunteer force, No. 99, to show that the parades in question could only be initiated by the Volunteers themselves. He (Lord Campbell) had not attempted to dispute it. The State, he well knew, had no power, by a decree of any kind, in time of peace, to muster their battalions. But, almost at the same moment, the noble Viscount had explained that no parade on a large scale could happen without the previous sanction of the illustrious Duke who had the chief command over the Army. It was the exact concession which he (Lord Campbell) wanted. The veto of the State was, therefore, incontestable, while the proposal to assemble came from the Force itself. So far, there was no difference between the noble Viscount and himself. That portion of his speech might have been omitted altogether. When, however, the noble Viscount came to the real question, he had no argument of any kind against producing the despatch, except that it was more censorious than several despatches which in other years the same occasions had elicited. In the opinion of the noble Viscount, an armed Force ought not to be informed of its deficiencies, but only be allowed to contemplate a picture of its merits. "We cannot," he insisted, "produce the letter of Sir Hope Grant, unless others much more full of eulogy are given." It was a good principle—whether or not one was convinced—to humour men in trifles. The despatch in question would not lose its value from any number which accompanied it. He should act as the noble Viscount wished, by withdrawing the Motion, and in a few days renew it, with the addition he referred to. But he could not sit down without noticing his charge, that the Motion had no object but to "cast a slur" on that branch of the Auxiliary Forces with which he (Lord Campbell) was connected, when it was directly calculated to improve and to assist it. To ascribe such a motive was against the Order of the House, even if the imputation were not, as it was, an entirely unfounded one.

VISCOUNT BURY: I did not suggest to the noble Lord to move for anything; I merely said he should move for all or none.

LORD CAMPBELL replied, that he would withdraw his Motion upon the understanding that he would move for the despatches on another occasion.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

House adjourned at Six o'clock, till
To-morrow, Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 26*th February*, 1880.

MINUTES.] — PUBLIC BILL — *Committee—Report*—Indian Salaries and Allowances* [72].

QUESTIONS.

MEDICAL STAFF (INDIA).

Mr. LYON PLAYFAIR asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether it is true, as stated in Indian papers, that the Government of India contemplates reducing the present fixed number of the higher grades (Deputy Surgeon General) of the Indian Medical Service, and of reserving the higher grade (Surgeon General) in each Presidency for members of the British Medical Service only; and, if so, whether it is the intention to offer increased pensions to the senior officers as a compensation for the serious change which would thus be made in their prospects?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: It has been decided to abolish the double medical administrative staff hitherto maintained in India, and from March 31, 1880, the British Army Medical Department and the India Medical Department will form one Department for the medical administration of the Army in the three Presidencies, the surgeon-general at headquarters in each Presidency being an officer of the British Army Medical Department. By this change six deputy surgeons-general of the Indian Service will be in excess of the requirements of the new Service, and the Government of India have offered to the surgeons-general and the deputy surgeons-general of the three Armies their retirement on the extra pension of their grade, with an honorary step of rank, notwithstanding that they may not have completed the qualifying service for these pensions. The number of retirements in each Army is restricted to two.

LIGHTHOUSES, IRELAND (WEST COAST).

Mr. LEA asked the President of the Board of Trade, If during the last five years plans have been presented for the erection of a new Lighthouse at Fanad Point, and also at other places on the West Coast of Ireland; if money to the amount of about £45,000 has accumulated towards these works; and, if the Board of Trade will urge upon the Commissioners of Irish Lights the necessity of proceeding with the work at once?

Viscount SANDON: I have placed myself in communication with the Commissioners of Irish Lights on the subject of the Question of the hon. Member. In 1875, plans were submitted by the Commissioners for the substitution of gas lighthouses for the existing oil lighthouses at Fanad Point; but the subject was afterwards postponed by the Commissioners, pending the further development of the electric light. No plans for other places on the West Coast of Ireland have been presented. Neither the Commissioners of Irish Lights nor the Board of Trade are aware of an accumulation of £45,000, or of any other sum, towards the works in question. The hon. Member will see that, having regard to the circumstances under which the Commissioners have suspended their action, it would be for them, whenever they think fit, rather than for the Board of Trade, to urge the matter; particularly as the case is not one of no light, but only of the substitution of one mode of illumination for another.

AFGHANISTAN—THE WAR—GENERAL ROBERTS'S REPORT.

Sir CHARLES W. DILKE asked the Under Secretary of State for India, in reference to a statement made by the "Times" correspondent to have been made by the Indian Government that only eighty-seven Afghans had been executed by the Military Commissions at Cabul, Whether the tabular statement on its way home includes the executions in December and January, or ends with those of November?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: So far as we know, the tabular statement referred to by the hon. Baronet certainly does include the executions in December and January.

POST OFFICE TELEGRAMS—DISCLOSURE OF PRIVATE TELEGRAMS.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL asked the Postmaster General, Whether he is aware that the purport and substance of the contents of certain private telegrams, handed in at the Dublin head office, appeared in two cases shortly after, and in one immediately after, the day of despatch, in the London correspondence of the "Freeman's Journal," purporting to come by Freeman private wire: No. 1. A message from the Secretaries of the Duchess of Marlborough's Relief Fund to the Editors of the "Times" and other London journals, sent on the 24th

January. No. 2. A message from Lord R. Churchill to Leonard Jerome, esquire, New York, sent on the 5th February. No. 3. A message from Secretaries of Duchess of Marlborough's Irish Relief Fund to the Mayors of Adelaide and other large towns in Australia, sent on the 9th February; whether the Post Office authorities propose to make inquiry as to how the contents of those telegrams were procured by, and permitted to appear in, that newspaper; and, whether any measures will be adopted to secure in the future that private telegrams shall not be disclosed in the interests of any journal?

MAJOR NOLAN: I also beg to put a Question on the same subject on behalf of my hon. Friend the Member for Tipperary (Mr. Gray). I beg to ask the noble Lord the Member for Woodstock, If he would quote in full the precise passages from the London correspondence of the "Freeman's Journal" to which he refers in the Question to the Postmaster General?

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I shall not waste the time of the House by reading long extracts from newspapers. The hon. and gallant Gentleman will find the first in the impression of the 24th of January, on the 5th page, 7th column, and 1st paragraph; the second in the impression of 7th of February, at the 5th page, 8th column, and 29th line, to the end of the paragraph; and the third in the impression of the 10th of February, at the 5th page, 4th column, and 6th paragraph.

LORD JOHN MANNERS: In answer to my noble Friend, I have to say that I am aware that the purport and substance of certain telegrams handed in at the Dublin head office appeared in the "London Correspondence" of *The Freeman's Journal*, purporting to come to Dublin by *The Freeman's* special wire. Strict inquiry has been made; but there is no proof of any wilful breach of confidence on the part of any of the Post Office clerks. Every effort is made, and will continue to be made, to prevent the disclosure of the contents of telegrams.

SOUTH AFRICA—THE ZULU WAR—GENERAL CREALOCK'S REPORT.

SIR EDWARD WATKIN asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether the Report of General Crealock upon the operations of the First Division in the Zulu War was not forwarded home by Sir Garnet Wolseley last summer; whether such Report was not printed, with maps attached, last autumn; and, if so, why the Report and maps were excluded from recent Papers, and, in fact, suppressed, until a Question was asked in the House; and, whether he can give a date before which the Report and maps will be issued to Members, in pursuance of the promise of the Secretary of State for War?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: General Crealock's Report was duly forwarded home by Sir Garnet Wolseley, and was received in this country last autumn. Being very voluminous, it was printed at the time for the use of the War Office, and, being so printed, was marked "Confidential." A copy was forwarded to the Colonial Office, from which, by mistake, the word "Confidential" had not been erased. I had arranged last spring with my right hon. and gallant Friend (Colonel Stanley), that if among the Papers forwarded by him to the Colonial Office there were any which, in his opinion, should not be published, they should be marked "Confidential;" because, being the channel through which despatches to the War Office were presented to Parliament, I had often felt a difficulty in deciding whether Papers of a professional or technical character were fit for publication or not. Therefore, as this Report was so marked, of course I did not publish it. I trust the hon. Member will feel, after this explanation, that his use of the word "suppression" has not been justified. The printers inform me that the Report will be published in a week.

FRAUDS BY FIDUCIARY AGENTS—LEGISLATION.

MR. BURT asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill this Session to deal with frauds by fiduciary agents, such a measure having been promised as far back as March 1878?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir JOHN HOLKER), in reply, said, that if a Bill dealing with the subject referred to by the hon. Gentleman were introduced this Session there would be little likelihood of its passing into law, so many Bills having already been brought forward. In these circumstances, it would be better for the Government to postpone introducing a measure of the character described by the hon. Member until the next Parliament.

EGYPTIAN AFFAIRS.

MR. W. CARTWRIGHT asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If there is any foundation for the report that Sir Rivers Wilson is likely to return to Egypt with the view of assuming official duties in that country; if this be the case, then whether he can inform the House as to the nature of the duties Sir Rivers Wilson is to assume; whether the appointment in contemplation is to be of new creation in addition to the appointments instituted last year for insuring the Anglo-French control then established; and, whether, on acceptance of this post, Sir Rivers Wilson is to sever all connection with the British Civil Service, or whether an arrangement is under consideration whereby while acting officially in Egypt he will be permitted to retain a right to rank as a member of the British Civil Service?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Negotiations are in progress with reference to the proposed Commission of Liquidation; but I am not in a position to give the House any information on the subject.

THE CHARITY COMMISSION—SITTINGS OF THE BOARD.

MR. PEMBERTON asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, What are the dates and duration of the vacations observed at the office of the Charity Commission; and, whether such vacations are regulated by any and what Act of Parliament, or, if not by Act of Parliament, then by what other authority?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: The sittings of the Board are suspended during a recess commencing about August 20, and lasting until an early day in October. The Office is open and ordinary business is transacted on every day in the year, except Sundays, Good Friday, the Monday and Tuesday in Easter week and Whit week, Christmas Day, and the two working days next following. This arrangement is not by statute, but is made by the Commissioners themselves, and is, I believe, in accordance with the usages of other Offices of a similar character.

PARLIAMENTARY AND MUNICIPAL REGISTRATION ACT, 1878 (41 & 42 VICT. c. 26, s. 5).

MR. CHAMBERLAIN asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he has addressed a Circular to the Vestry Clerks of the Metropolis with reference to the provisions of the Act 41 and 42 Vic. c. 26, s. 5, enfranchising separate occupiers of parts of houses; and, if so, whether he has any objection to laying this Circular, and the replies of the Vestry Clerks thereto, upon the Table of the House?

MR. ASSHETON CROSS, in reply, said, it was in consequence of a Question from the hon. Gentleman last Session that he had issued a Circular. The Circular did not express, nor was it intended to express, any opinion as to what the state of the law was. Many replies had been received. They were very voluminous; but if the hon. Member wished to see them he should be happy to show them to him.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON WINE DUTIES—THE REPORT.

MR. C. M. PALMER asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Report of the Select Committee of last year on Wine Duties, Whether he is prepared to accept, in a greater or lesser degree, the recommendation of that Report, provided wine-growing countries are disposed to look to modifications of their tariffs on British goods?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: To a Question of this sort the hon. Member will see that it is obvious that I can give no further answer than that the matter is at present under consideration.

COMPANIES ACT, 1879—JOINT STOCK BANKS.

MR. HEYGATE asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If he can state to the House what number of Joint Stock Banks have announced their intention of registering under the Act of last Session; and, whether Her Majesty's

Government contemplate any further legislation with reference to the liability of Joint Stock Banks.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: I am not in possession officially of any information as to the number of Joint Stock Banks that have announced their intention of adopting the Act. But I have received an intimation upon which, I believe, I can rely, and from which I learn that since the passing of the Act 22 English unlimited liability banks have decided to register under the Act. The paid-up capital of these banks amounts to £11,000,000, and the total paid-up capital in English unlimited liability banks amounts to £20,800,000; so more than half of these banks have decided to avail themselves of the Act of last Session. It is not at present in the contemplation of the Government to propose any fresh legislation with reference to the liability of Joint Stock Banks?

SOUTH AFRICA—THE ZULU WAR—THE FIELD OF ISANDHLWANA.

Mr. A. M'ARTHUR asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether his attention has been called to a letter published in the "Natal Witness" of January 4th, in which the writer, Mr. W. E. Bale, states that on recently visiting the battle field of Isandhlwana he was horrified to find, for two miles, the dead bodies of numbers of the English force either lying unburied, or so imperfectly buried that their remains were exposed to view; whether his attention has also been called to another letter from the same writer, published in the "Natal Colonist" of January 16th, in which he states that the Chief Hlubi men have found at a kraal near Isandhlwana the remains of a number of soldiers of the 24th regiment; and, if these reports should on inquiry prove to be correct, whether he will take immediate steps to secure for the unburied dead, wherever they may be found, decent interment?

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I have not seen the reports which the hon. Member has quoted; but I have written by to-day's mail to Natal to make inquiry on the subject. If they are correct, I do not doubt that steps have already been taken for the decent interment of any bodies left unburied. But I cannot think that they are correct; for in a despatch received early last July, and published at that time, the hon. Member will find an account of the steps that had been taken for the interment of those who fell at Isandhlwana. The bodies of the soldiers of the 24th Regiment were left, at the request, I think, of the Colonel of the regiment, to be buried by their comrades, a party of whom were, I believe, subsequently engaged for a fortnight in this work. I have heard from a gentleman connected with the War Office, who went out to Natal last summer on an official mission, that he visited Isandhlwana about the end of October, and rode all over the field of battle with the express object of seeing whether the dead were properly buried, as General Clifford had asked him to do so. He saw no unburied bodies. As the grass was then short, he must have seen them if there were any; and, in his opinion, the interment had been properly carried out.

NAVY—THE ROYAL MARINES—THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE.

Mr. ANDERSON asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, If it be the fact that the Committee on the Corps of Royal Marines contains, besides the two members of the Marine Office acknowledged by him, an officer formerly in the Marine Office, also an officer who was twice promoted out of his turn, also an officer to act as secretary who is or was employed on Judge Advocate General's work for the Marine Office, while the two other Marine officers are only of the rank of captain; if he had that information before him when he stated that Marine Office views are represented on the Committee by only two out of eight; and, if he will inform the House what subjects have been submitted to that Committee, or, at least, whether officers' grievances form one of these subjects?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: The Departmental Committee on the corps of Royal Marines consists of officers whose names I will read to the House. The officers forming the Committee are Sir Astley Cooper Key, the First Naval Lord; Major General Adair, D.A.G.; Major General Williams, who from 1867 to 1872 held the office of Assistant Adjutant General, and has since been Colonel Commandant, R.M.A.; Major General

Pym, who by different Boards of Admiralty was promoted for good service; Captain Hopkins, R.N.; Colonel Sir F. Worgan Festing, the present Assistant Adjutant General; and Captains Way, R.M.L.I., and Poore, R.M.A.; who were designated by the Commandants of their respective Divisions. Major Blake, the Secretary to the Committee, has been employed on Judge Advocate General's work for some years. These facts are quite consistent with my answer to the hon. Member's former Question. The hon. Member asked me if the Committee consists almost exclusively of persons connected with the Marine Office? Two members only are at present connected with that Office, and a third was connected with it eight years ago. I do not think it right at present to state what questions have been referred to the Committee.

ARMY—VOLUNTARY RETIREMENT OF OFFICERS.

Viscount LEWISHAM asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether anything, and if so what, has been decided with reference to the voluntary retirement of Officers in respect to the reckoning of time of service before the age of twenty and when on half-pay service?

Colonel STANLEY: The recommendations of the Committee upon the service of young officers have been embodied in a Warrant which has been already approved and acted on, and will be published in the Army Circulars of March. The Warrant bears date the 5th of February.

INDIA OFFICE—SHIPPING CONTRACTS.

Mr. PULESTON asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether he can produce copies of all contracts entered into by the India Office for the carriage of Railway materials to India in shipments of over one thousand tons since the 10th March last, with particulars or copies of any advertisements inviting tenders for the carriage of all or any portion of such Railway materials; and, when the Report with reference to the carriage of Railway materials to India, a copy of which was promised on the 10th March last to be furnished to the House by him, will be laid upon the Table?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: We have no desire to withhold any information which can properly be given; but to produce copies of our contracts for freight would be injurious to the public interest, and possibly also to some of the contracting shippers. No private firm would disclose its contracts under similar circumstances; and I believe that no Government Department publishes the details of its contracts. As regards the Departmental Report on freight to India, it is quite true that in promising an inquiry last year I did say that the Report would be laid upon the Table; but when the inquiry was made it was found that part, at least, of the evidence could only be obtained under a promise of secrecy, and it would be, therefore, impossible to produce it.

Mr. E. JENKINS wished to know if the Report in question implicated any official at the India Office, or otherwise, and if that was the reason why it was held back?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: I think it will be obvious to the House that if I am unable to produce the document, it is not likely I can give the House the contents of it.

Mr. E. JENKINS said, that as the Report had not been presented, he would call attention to the discussion which had taken place last year, and move for the Papers.

AFRICA (WEST COAST)—MEDINA AND LIBERIA.

Mr. PULESTON asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he has received any information as to the annexation of Medina to Liberia; and, if it be a fact, whether he can give the House the terms of such acquisition, and how far it may affect the trade and commerce of Sierra Leone and the Sherbro?

Mr. BOURKE: No, Sir. The intelligence as to the annexation of Medina by Liberia has not reached the Foreign Office.

INDIA—INDIGO CULTIVATION IN BEHAR.

Mr. O'DONNELL asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether his attention has been directed to the following passage in a late Report or

Resolution of Sir Ashley Eden, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal:—

> "The attention of Government was especially drawn during the year to the abuses which had been allowed to grow up in connection with indigo cultivation in Behar. A Report submitted by the Commissioner of Patna conclusively showed that the system, as it existed, involved an amount of lawlessness and oppression, principally in the shape of extorted agreements to cultivate and of seizure of ploughs and cattle, which could not be tolerated;"

and, whether he will lay upon the Table the Report of the Commissioner of the Patna district referred to, and the Reports of his subordinate magistrate collectors of Muzaffarpur, Durbhaca, Sarun, and Chumparan, on which the Report of the Commissioner of the Patna division was based?

MR. E. STANHOPE: Although we have searched for it, we have not been able to find the passage referred to by the hon. Member. Perhaps he will be kind enough to send me a reference to it.

AFGHANISTAN.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, now that the Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill has passed, he will give a day for the discussion of the Affairs of Afghanistan which was postponed at his request?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I am sorry that it is quite out of my power to make any promise at present of a day for any subject of this character. We have a great deal of Business that must necessarily be got through within a limited time. There are the Army and Navy Estimates, and the number of men that must be voted as the foundation for the continuance of the Mutiny Bill. We have financial measures that are pressing in point of time, and there is other Business before the House which renders it impossible for me to promise any day before Easter.

RAILWAY SERVANTS—COMPENSATION FOR INJURY.

MR. MUNDELLA asked the Chairman of Ways and Means, Whether, in view of the fact that the Government has introduced a Bill in the other House of Parliament dealing with the whole question of the liability of employers to their servants in cases of injury resulting from negligence, he proposes to proceed with his Motion on Friday with reference to railway employés only?

MR. RAIKES said, he intended to proceed with his Motion, if he could. The Motion dealt with a subject which could be conveniently separated from the general question of the liability of employers.

MR. SULLIVAN asked the Speaker whether it would be in Order to discuss a Motion on a subject in connection with which there was a Bill before Parliament?

MR. SPEAKER said, he could not give the hon. and learned Member a definite answer to his Question until he had examined the Motion and the Bill to which it related.

MERCHANT SHIPPING—GRAIN CARGOES.—OBSERVATIONS.

MR. PLIMSOLL rose to move the adjournment of the House, a course which, he said, he would not have taken if the Question he had handed in on the previous night had found its way into the Order Paper. He had, however, been told that it was informal, and he, consequently, had no resource but to appeal to the House. On Tuesday evening last the noble Lord the President of the Board of Trade, in dealing with some 16 ships which he (Mr. Plimsoll) had spoken of as having been grain-laden and subsequently lost, very summarily disposed of the first four named by observing that two of them were not grain-laden but had mixed cargoes, and that the two others had general cargoes. That statement of the noble Lord had astonished him, as he had taken pains to procure accurate information on the subject. But, after what fell from the noble Lord, he had made further inquiries, and he had obtained copious extracts from the manifests of the ships lodged at the ports of shipping. He found that in the case of the *Surbiton* there were 295 tierces of canned goods, and 22 tons of bacon; but there were also 50,000 bushels of wheat, equal to 1,250 tons. On board the *Zanzibar* there were 2,793 barrels and 6,753 sacks of flour, as well as 1,260 bags of oatmeal, making in all 1,093 tons, while there were 47,000 bushels of wheat, weighing 1,175 tons. The *Homer* carried 1,509 barrels of apples, 35,990 lb. of bacon, 5,000 lb. of butter, 1,238 lb. of cheese, and 286,500 lb. of lard, making in all 299 tons; while she had on board 43,642 bushels of wheat, weighing 1,091 tons. The *Bernina* carried stearine, bacon, cheese, hams, lard, cottonseed-cake, barrel flour, flour in sacks, pork, and canned goods to the amount of 342 tons; but she had on board 4,000 bushels of Indian corn and 62,650 bushels of wheat, making 1,666 tons. That being so, he would ask the House whether he was not justified in speaking of those ships as corn-laden vessels, and what it thought of the candour of the reply which had been put into the mouth of the President of the Board of Trade, in which he objected to these vessels as having been improperly described? He wanted to take that opportunity to state that in 1875, 1876, and previously, the officials of the Board of Trade had supplied information through the Presidents which was totally inaccurate. [" Order!"]

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is now referring to a discussion which took place the other evening on the Motion of the noble Lord the Member for Liverpool (Viscount Sandon), and to a Bill which the hon. Member introduced in the earlier part of the Session. The hon. Member must be aware that to refer to debates that have taken place during the current Session is irregular. It appears to me that the course the hon. Member is now taking is quite irregular, and is not covered by moving the adjournment of the House.

Mr. PLIMSOLL: I at once defer to your decision, Sir.

Sir WILFRID LAWSON: I wish to ask a Question of the hon. and gallant Baronet the Member for Westminster, of which I have not given him private Notice, but which is of a nature than can be answered without. I observe in this morning's papers a paragraph authorized by the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll), in which he says he has good ground for believing that the blocking Notice to the Merchant Shipping (Grain Cargoes) Bill, about which there has been so much discussion, was put upon the Paper without the knowledge of the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster and the hon. Member for Guildford. I think it is only right I should ask the hon. and gallant Member for Westminster whether there is any foundation for that belief?

Sir CHARLES RUSSELL: I have in my pocket a letter on the subject which I intended to send to *The Times*; but as a Question has been put to me with respect to it, I beg to say that there is no foundation whatsoever for the statement to which the hon. Baronet refers.

PARLIAMENT—ORDER—VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH.

Mr. BIGGAR: I wish to ask a Question of the noble Lord the Member for County Down (Viscount Castlereagh), of which I have given him private Notice, and, as I may have a few words to say in explanation of that Question, I intend to conclude with a Motion. It will be in the recollection of the House that a few days ago the noble Lord made a personal explanation from his place in this House. The explanation was delivered in an audible tone, and I believe was fully heard by all the Members in the House. Immediately the noble Lord sat down, the noble Marquess the Member for the Radnor Burghs (the Marquess of Hartington) got up and made an explanation in which—[" Order, order!"]——

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Cavan appears to me to be taking precisely the same course as that which was taken a short time ago by the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll), and from which that hon. Member, on my calling attention to its irregularity, desisted. The hon. Member for Cavan, as I understand him, proposes to refer to what took place in this House in debate during the current Session of Parliament. That proceeding is irregular. He also proposes to ask the noble Lord the Member for County Down Questions not referring to any Bill or Motion before the House. That also is irregular. These irregularities are not covered by a Motion for the adjournment of the House.

Mr. BIGGAR: Just to a point of Order, Sir. My Question is not upon what the noble Lord said in debate, but what he is reported in *The Times* newspaper to have said. What I wish to point out to Mr. Speaker is——[" Order, order!"]

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member has stated distinctly that he is going to ask certain Questions of the noble Lord the Member for County Down. Those Questions, having no reference to any Bill or Motion before the House, cannot, under the Standing Orders of the House, be put.

MR. CALLAN: As one interested, and who took an active part in the county of Down election, I do hope and trust that the House will accord its indulgence to the hon. Member for Cavan —["No, no!"]—because the matter involves the honour—["Oh, oh!"]

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. Member for Cavan, or any other hon. Member, desires to bring before the House the conduct of the noble Lord the Member for County Down, he should do it by a Motion. It cannot be permitted that the proceedings of this House should be interrupted by Questions of this irregular character.

MR. BIGGAR: Well, Mr. Speaker, I give Notice that on going into Committee of Supply I will, on the first opportunity, call attention to this matter, and ask the noble Lord a Question.

MOTIONS.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER moved—

"That the Orders of the Day be postponed until after the Notice of Motion relating to the Business of the House (Order in Debate)."

MR. SHAW asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what course he intended to pursue with regard to his Resolution? He hoped the debate on the Main Question might terminate that night; and in that case, he wished to know whether the Resolution would then be considered in a Committee of the Whole House, so that the Amendments which were on the Paper, many of which were Amendments of words, could be considered? This course would save considerable time, and enable the Government to give explanations on points not possible to be discussed in the House. He was sure the Motion would be put in such a form as would enable the Amendments to be moved.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he apprehended that the Resolution would be moved in the Whole House. He did not see how they could be conveniently moved in Committee. Of course, it was open to any hon. Gentleman to move any Amendment he might please, and he supposed that Amendments would be moved at various stages, one after the other, in the regular manner.

MR. SHAW asked whether, after a decision was come to on the Main Question, it would be competent for any hon. Member to move an Amendment?

MR. SPEAKER: I presume it will be the wish of the House that the Amendments should be taken in succession in the order in which they stand on the Paper.

MR. SULLIVAN: May I ask if the Question is put on the first Amendment, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question," and decided in the negative, will not that preclude any subsequent Amendments?

MR. SPEAKER: In answer to the hon. and learned Member, I wish to state I shall not put the Question in that form. If it were so put, any subsequent Amendment would, of course, be excluded.

Motion *agreed to.*

Ordered, That the Orders of the Day be postponed until after the Notice of Motion relating to the Business of the House (Order in Debate). —(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

PARLIAMENT — BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (ORDER IN DEBATE.)

RESOLUTIONS.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER rose to move the following Resolutions:—

"(1.) That, whenever any Member shall have been named by the Speaker, or by the Chairman of a Committee of the whole House, as disregarding the authority of the Chair, or abusing the Rules of the House by persistently and wilfully obstructing the business of the House, or otherwise, then, if the offence has been committed in the House, the Speaker shall forthwith put the question, on a Motion being made, no amendment, adjournment, or debate being allowed, 'That such Member be suspended from the service of the House during the remainder of that day's sitting;' and, if the offence has been committed in a Committee of the whole House, the Chairman shall, on a Motion being made, put the same question in a similar way, and if the Motion is carried shall forthwith suspend the proceedings of the Committee and report the circumstance to the

House; and the Speaker shall thereupon put the same question, without amendment, adjournment, or debate, as if the offence had been committed in the House itself. If any Member be suspended three times in one Session, under this Order, his suspension on the third occasion shall continue for one week, and until a Motion has been made, upon which it shall be decided, at one sitting, by the House, whether the suspension shall then cease, or for what longer period it shall continue; and, on the occasion of such Motion, the Member may, if he desires it, be heard in his place. (2.) That this be a Standing Order of the House."

The right hon. Gentleman said: In moving the Resolutions which I have placed on the Paper, it will be my object to detain the House for as short a period as I can. I will also endeavour, as far as possible, to avoid anything of an irritating or contentious character. I apprehend it will be generally admitted that no Assembly in the world can conduct its business unless it has Rules for the conduct of business and observes those Rules; and the larger the Assembly, the more miscellaneous the character of the views of those who compose it, and the greater and the more various the amount of the business it has to transact, the more important is it that it should have, and observe, a fixed set of Rules for its proceedings. Now Rules, of course, imply some restriction on the liberty of those who take part in debate. But I venture to say that there is no Assembly in the world which, in proportion to its size and the multiplicity and importance of the subjects with which it has to deal, has so few restrictions placed upon the freedom of discussion as this House of Commons. I will not detain the House by attempting to enlarge on the magnitude of the task which it has to discharge. We know perfectly well that it has, in the first place, the important duty of voting the Supplies and criticizing the Estimates which are presented by the Government. We know also that it has, in addition, a large amount of legislation, both public and private, to conduct. It is also one of the greatest duties and privileges of this House to discuss everything that comes under the description of a grievance; and under this description we now find that almost every matter that interests the people of this country, or any section of them, may be, and usually is, brought forward. Moreover, the House of Commons holds the proud position in the eyes of the world of taking the lead in the discussion of questions affecting matters far beyond the limits even of the British Empire. Considering, then, the importance of this work, and how very keen are the interests which different Members take in different portions of the business, and remembering how necessarily limited our time for discussion is, it is absolutely impossible that we could do anything like justice to ourselves or to the task imposed upon us unless we observe, both in their spirit and in their letter, those Rules laid down for our guidance. Now, I would point out that this House has peculiar modes of working, and is jealous, and justly jealous, to a great degree for the maintenance of its accustomed procedure. It is the habit of this House to act, as much as possible, as a whole. There is a jealousy on the part of the House—and, I think, a very reasonable and laudable jealousy —of allowing the functions which it should itself discharge, as a whole, to be handed over to Select Committees of its own body, or any authority external to itself. We do, indeed, appoint Select Committees to inquire into numerous questions; but these Committees have no authority of their own. They simply collect information and make representations, which have afterwards to be considered and revised, and which are very freely dealt with by the House as a whole. There are some few portions of our duties which we are prepared to assign to the action of portions of our House. There are certain questions which are referred, especially in matters of private legislation, to Committees upstairs, whose decision and conclusions we usually agree to accept. There are other matters—as, for instance, the examination of the public accounts—which we refer to Standing Committees. And so with regard to Petitions and other matters, we do refer some portions of our Business to small bodies of our own Members; but, on the whole, we desire to transact the larger part of our own Business by the action of the House itself. Well, as we do not recognize the functions of any authorities external to this House, so even in the House itself we have peculiar relations with him who is called upon to preside over our debates, and to keep order in our proceedings. It is most important that we should bear in mind what is the true relation of the House to the distinguished person who occupies our Chair. The Speaker, as you, Sir, have yourself reminded us, and as your Predecessors on various previous occasions have done, is not the master, but the servant of the House. The Speaker acts as the interpreter, not as the lawmaker, but as the interpreter of the Rules regulating the Business of the House. As such he is authorized to expound the Rules and the Orders which the House has agreed to. Now, it would be altogether a departure from our principles if we were to erect the Speaker into an authority who had any authority separate and external to the House. On the other hand, it is essential to the proper conduct of the Business of this House that we should recognize and respect the position of the Speaker; that we should bear in mind the very great difficulties and responsibilities of his high office; and that we should be determined loyally to support him, not only in word, but in deed and in truth. Unless we are prepared to give that loyal support to the Speaker, I see no possibility of the proper conduct of the Business of this House. I might refer—but I really think it is quite unnecessary for me to do so—to the great increase which has of late years taken place in the Business of this House. On this subject some curious statistics were quoted some years ago by a noble Lord who is now no longer a Member of this House, but who has gone to "another place." I am referring, of course, to an interesting speech which Lord Sudeley made when he was a Member of this House, and which showed the increasing numbers of those who take part in our debates. Although the great competition among hon. Members to obtain a hearing, and to bring forward Business in which they are specially interested, must necessarily increase our embarrassments in getting through the mass of work which we have to discharge, still I am quite sure that every Member of this House will only rejoice that more and more of its Members should take a real interest in its Business, provided that in so doing they exercise that regard for the progress of Business generally, and that they also exercise that amount of respect for the feelings of others, and that amount of forbearance which, in an Assembly holding the high character that the House of Commons has always held, we have every right to expect from all its Members. In addition to the amount of Business which has grown upon us, we have to notice also that there have been of late some Rules introduced for the purpose of sparing hon. Members from too great sacrifices in point of the time they have to spend in the House. Rules have been introduced which are meant to prevent the overstraining of our physical powers, and there are other Rules to insure, as far as we can do it, something like certainty as to the time at which Business is to be brought before us. We find, when these Rules are introduced, that there are difficulties which arise from the Rules themselves. The Rule, for instance, which says that no new Business which is opposed shall be taken after half-past 12 o'clock at night is a Rule which, as hon. Members are aware, introduces a good deal of difficulty and embarrassment in the conduct of Business. What, then, is the position in which we stand, and what are the dangers against which we have to guard? The great danger we have to guard against is this—that the House may find itself blocked in the course of its proceedings, and may find itself unable to carry through in a satisfactory and creditable manner the Business which falls upon it. If it should once become imminent, and appear to the country that this House has become incapable of transacting the Business which it is called upon to discharge, the consequences would be of the most serious character. If the House of Commons once loses character—if it once loses caste—I need not ask you what must necessarily be the effect on the Constitution of the country. I need not ask you to consider what amount of irregular action outside this House would take place if it were found that the House was incapable of doing the nation's work. I need not point out to you that even with regard to the function which the House exercises, or ought to exercise, in the general control of the policy and the Business of the country, its hands would be weakened, and more and more unfitted to exercise any control which would be of any value. Moreover, if the House acquired the character of being incapable of the conduct of Business, and if it were understood that time was deliberately and fruitlessly wasted in this House, the best men—those whom we are proud to attract to sit within our walls and to take part in our proceedings—would instinctively shrink from joining such an Assembly, and the character of the House would greatly deteriorate. This House has had a proud history for many centuries; it has withstood many assaults of one kind or another, and it has withstood them triumphantly. I believe that such is its natural strength, and that so deep are its roots in the affection and confidence of the people, that it would successfully withstand many more assaults of a more violent character still than those which it has had to encounter. But of all the fates which could await such an Assembly as this, the worst would be to gradually sink into contempt; and of all deaths by which it could die, the worst would be that of dying because it came to be despised by the people of this country. Now, Sir, what are the remedies for the evils which undoubtedly to some extent exist, and which threaten to become more serious. We cannot help seeing that for the last three or four years there has been a growing disposition in this House to waste time, and to obstruct Business. I do not wish to go into matters which are familiar to everyone who has sat through the last few Sessions. I do not wish to rouse up old controversies; but I appeal to the memory and conscience of everyone here present to say whether I am not strictly within the truth when I assert that, during the last three or four years, there has been growing up among us a system of Obstruction, which, if it is unchecked, and if it is allowed to gather head, must be destructive to the character and the existence of Parliament. Then, I ask—" What are the remedies which must be considered for this state of things?" They are of different characters. We are told by some that the duties which are thrown upon Parliament are so large and so multitudinous that it is impossible for one House to discharge them; and that we ought, therefore, to endeavour to diminish the work we have to do by handing over a portion of it to other bodies. [" Hear, hear!"] A cheer comes from the part of the House in which that doctrine is put forward in its most extreme form. [Mr. O'Donnell: No.] As far as we at present know, the most extreme form of it would be a separation of the Business of the three Kingdoms, and the apportionment of it among Parliaments representing different portions of the United Kingdom. I do not suppose that the House will entertain for a moment that remedy. There are other modes, of course, which may be suggested for diminishing the work which falls on the House as a whole. One has been the appointment of Grand Committees, and the reference of Business which is now done in the whole House to Committees of a very large and peculiar character. Another system which has found favour, and which, I believe, admits of considerable development, is an extension of the system known as that of Provisional Orders, by which a good deal of Business is usefully transacted outside the House, and arrangements are made and embodied in Provisional Orders which are afterwards submitted to the consideration and sanction of the whole House. These are matters which deserve consideration; and I have no doubt that in course of time they will be carefully examined and considered. But I do not think that is the direction in which we shall do best at the present time to look for our remedy. If the evils I have adverted to are not in some way dealt with and checked, we shall find that any diminution of the extent of our work will be altogether illusory and will lead to disappointment. Then, there is another class of remedies suggested. It is said that we ought to change the Rules. It is said that the Rules, though they may have been adequate in times past, are no longer adequate; and that we ought to restrict, in various ways, the freedom of debate and the rights of minorities. Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not know what others may think; but, for my own part, I say it would be a matter of the deepest pain to me to have to take part in any restriction, and that certainly I should decidedly refuse to take part in any unnecessary restriction, upon the freedom of debate and the rights of minorities. I know very well that you cannot allow that freedom, and that you cannot protect those rights, without the risk of considerable interference and frequent collisions between different classes of Members, and without, to a certain extent, an expenditure of time, which, by cynics and hostile critics, may be regarded as a waste of time. I do not, however, regard such struggles, if they are fairly and honestly conducted, as a waste of time. I believe one great merit of the conduct of Business in this country is in our opposition to measures so long as they are still merely submitted for consideration, followed by our acquiescence in them when they have become the law of the land; and that this happy feature in the legislation of this country is due to the great freedom given to those who wish to discuss such measures when brought forward. I believe it would be a great misfortune, in the end, if we were in any way unnecessarily to restrict freedom of debate or the rights of minorities. I do not know that we have arrived at a perfect set of Rules yet; and I have no doubt that there are matters upon which we may have new Rules, and we may from time to time propose new Rules, and discuss and consider them. But if we think that by such Rules we are to prevent Obstruction altogether, I am quite certain that we are reckoning in the dark. There is only one alteration of our Rules which would be of a character that really could prevent Obstruction, and that is one for which we have no English name, but which is known to us all under the name of the *clôture*. If we were certain that Business could be got through in a certain time, we know that it would be possible to make a Rule to that effect. But that is a method on which I venture to think that this House will pause very long before they adopt it. It is wholly at variance with the traditions of the British House of Commons. Well, there is one thing more we have to consider, and that is this—suppose that, instead of diminishing the extent of our work, and instead of attempting to change our Rules with a view to prevent Obstruction, we were to make one honest effort to see whether we cannot get through the work which we have before us according to the Rules which we have to work by—that we will steadfastly and sternly maintain order, and insist upon the observance of those Rules, both in their letter and in their spirit. There can be no other way—I know of no other way — than that of supporting and strengthening the hands of our Speaker and of the Chairman of Committees. Well, Sir, the Resolution which I have the honour to propose is a Resolution which is intended to strengthen the hands of Mr. Speaker and of the Chairman of Committees. I desire the House to bear in mind that we must not bring the Chair into a false position; that we must not throw upon Mr. Speaker duties which he ought not to be called upon to discharge; that we must not try to escape from duties which lie upon the House itself. Now, we have witnessed not unfrequently, and especially of late years, that when any Member is straining the Rules of the House, is running up to the extreme limit of the Rules, or even going beyond the limit, he is liable to be called to Order, and he is called to Order. Mr. Speaker informs him that he is transgressing the Rules of the House; and in former times I think that it was the general practice that any Member to whom such intimation was given took the reproof which was contained in those warnings, and abstained from proceeding in a course which he was told by the highest authority was one which would lead him beyond proper bounds. But we have, Sir, occasionally been obliged to witness a very different and humiliating spectacle. We have seen the decision of Mr. Speaker, instead of being cheerfully accepted, accepted, indeed, for a moment in words, but immediately set aside by some slight alteration of phraseology, by some method which occurs to a Member who does not desire, honestly and faithfully, to submit himself to the ruling of the Chair; and the position in which you, Sir, and in which the Chairman of Committees has not unfrequently been placed, has been a position which must have caused the greatest pain and the greatest sorrow to those who have seen what has been taking place. We respect and entirely appreciate the firmness and impartiality with which you and the Chairman of Committees have always applied the Rules and Orders of the House. But we have felt that, when your simple word was not held to be sufficient law, a difficulty arose as to what could be done in order to enforce it. Now, the object which I have in bringing forward the Resolution to-night, is to place our proceedings on such a footing that your decision shall at once obtain respect, and that respect shall be given to it by action on the part of the House itself. The proposal which I have to make is that whenever any Member—I will not read the whole of the Resolution, because part of it applies to proceedings in Committees of the Whole House—shall have been named by the Speaker as abusing the Rules of the House by persistently and wilfully obstructing the Business of the House or otherwise, the Speaker shall forthwith put the Question, on a Motion being made, no Amendment, adjournment, or debate being allowed—

> "That such Member be suspended from the service of the House during the remainder of that day's sitting."

I have observed, from what I have heard from some Members, and from Amendments which have been placed on the Paper by others, that there is some misunderstanding even now as to the course that is to be taken if this Resolution should be passed. The occasion is to arise when any Member shall have been named by Mr. Speaker as disregarding his authority—that is to say, the initiative, in a certain sense, is the initiative of Mr. Speaker. We know perfectly well that Mr. Speaker does interfere, from time to time, by calling a Member to Order. It does not follow that there is no initiative on the part of the House, because it is the constant habit of Members to get up and appeal to Mr. Speaker whether a Member is or is not in Order. My hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth (Mr. Sampson Lloyd), for instance, has given Notice that he will propose an Amendment by which any Member may draw the attention of the Chair to misconduct on the part of a Member; but he is only describing that which, under this Resolution, would be equally in the power of any Member to do when proceedings were going on which he thought were disorderly—namely, to rise and appeal to Mr. Speaker. But I would observe this as a distinction—that, according to the form which I propose, Mr. Speaker has the power to bring a Member to Order by a clear warning, and to express to him his opinion upon the subject before he proceeds to the strong measure of naming him, and thereby allowing the Motion to be put for his suspension; whereas, under the proposal of the hon. Member for Plymouth, there would be power in a Member at any moment to make that Motion, and he would only be prevented from doing that by Mr. Speaker stating that the interruption was frivolous, and refusing to put the Motion. Now, I think if a Motion is made, and Mr. Speaker is to exercise his judgment whether it ought or ought not to be put, that would place Mr. Speaker in a position of great embarrassment, in which we ought not to put him. On the other hand, Mr. Speaker has the absolute power of naming a Member—a power which it is well known he has had occasion to exercise—a power which has been so great, that the mere naming of a Member has been sufficient to bring him to an acknowledgment of his error and to induce him to submit himself to the House. When we consider that this is a power which Mr. Speaker always had, and that we propose only to take further steps as it has failed to produce this effect, I think we are proceeding entirely within the lines of the constitution of the House. Well, that being so, Mr. Speaker having named an hon. Member, it becomes the duty of some Member in the House to move that the Member so named be suspended from the service of the House during the remainder of the Sitting; and Mr. Speaker, as a matter of course, will put that Motion without Amendment, adjournment, or debate. It is obvious that if Amendment, adjournment, or debate were allowed, it would be but the beginning of a wrangle; and, considering that the strong step of naming a Member would not be taken until he had had every opportunity of putting himself right, I apprehend that no injustice would be done. The hon. Member for Plymouth proposes another thing which I do not agree with. He says that when this Motion is made it shall not be carried except by a majority of two-thirds. I think that is a very awkward Rule to lay down. It would be an entirely new practice in this House. We know of no such thing in this House as majorities of two-thirds. I should be exceeding sorry to see the introduction of such a principle as that in our proceedings, of which we at present know nothing. Well, I will not further discuss these distinctions; but I will proceed to explain that when a Motion shall have been so made and carried, the Member will be suspended from the service of the House during the remainder of that day's Sitting. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sandwich (Mr.

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Knatchbull-Hugessen) objects to suspension from the service of the House; he prefers that the Member should be put to silence. I would only observe that in 1878 a Select Committee, of which the right hon. Gentleman was a Member, was appointed to consider the whole of this question. Their Resolution was carried by a single vote; but still it was carried, and the Resolution of that Committee forms the basis of the Resolution which I now propose to the House. Then, that having been done, the Member will be suspended from the service of the House—that is, not merely put to silence, but prevented from voting as well as speaking during that day's Sitting. If he offends a second time the same thing will take place; but if he offends a third time his suspension will be for one week in any circumstances; his suspension may continue further if the House should so decide. The Member having been suspended from the service of the House, it will be for the House, on a subsequent occasion, to determine for what length of time that suspension shall continue. It will be observed that in proposing this course of proceeding we have endeavoured to retain, as far as possible, two safeguards for the freedom of debate—in the first place, by getting the judgment of those actually present as to the nature and extent of the obstruction offered to the Business of the House; and, in the second place, by deferring the visitation of any grave punishment upon an offending Member until the question can be considered in a full House after due Notice. In attempting to deal with the subject of Obstruction we lie between two great difficulties. If we do not proceed at the moment, it may be difficult to determine afterwards in what manner we can bring the conduct of a Member before the House; because the House would not be seized of the point in dispute, and could not take cognizance of what had occurred on the previous Sitting, the words he used not having been taken down, and the proceedings not being made manifest to the House in any way. In order, therefore, to avoid any difference of opinion arising on the point, it is important that the House should proceed to immediate judgment, as it were, on the spot, in the presence of those who had witnessed the commission of the offence and were acquainted with the surrounding circumstances. But, on the other hand, to allow a small and thin House, which might probably be all that witnessed the actual Obstruction, to put a serious punishment on one of its Members would be a serious matter, and ought not to be done without great consideration. A debate on the subject might lead to a great deal of heat; and it would be rather a strong course to adopt to give the majority in a House, consisting of a fifth, or a sixth, or, perhaps, of a tenth of its full complement of Members, the power of suspending a Member from his service for a considerable length of time. Were we to confer such a power upon the majority in a thin House, we should place ourselves in a false position both as regards justice to our Members and the constitution of the Empire. Therefore, I think we should be acting wisely in leaving it to what has been happily termed the instinct of the House to determine at the moment whether a Member has been guilty of Obstruction, leaving it to a subsequent occasion for the House to decide, in a deliberate and judicial spirit, upon the punishment that should be inflicted upon him. I am anxious that the House should arrive at a determination with regard to the Government proposal with as little delay as possible; but, at the same time, I hope that no determination with respect to it will be arrived at without the most careful deliberation. I will not say anything at the present moment in support of the proposition that the terms of the first Resolution should be incorporated in the Standing Orders of the House further than this—that I earnestly press upon the House the consideration that Obstruction is an evil which has grown up in a large measure during the life of the present Parliament, and that this House has had the opportunity—the melancholy opportunity—of witnessing its growth and its threatening character; and therefore it would be a sad record for us if we were to allow this Parliament to come to an end without taking effectual steps to guard against the future growth of this evil. We are now, happily, in a sufficiently calm condition to enable us to deal with this subject deliberately. There has been no exciting agitation with regard to it of late, and we are able to look upon it in a judicial and temperate spirit. This, therefore, is the very time in which we may conveniently consider the question and attempt to provide an efficient antidote for the evil, and so leave as a legacy to the Parliament which may succeed us not only the evil but its remedy. Although it may be said that the records of this Parliament may be very unsatisfactory as regards the progress of Business, on the other hand, if we take such steps as will put an end to Obstruction, we shall deserve the good opinion of the country if we succeed in erecting a barrier against the further progress of an evil which threatens the very existence of the House as a deliberative Assembly. The right hon. Gentleman concluded by moving the Resolution which he had placed upon the Paper.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, whenever any Member shall have been named by the Speaker, or by the Chairman of a Committee of the whole House, as disregarding the authority of the Chair, or abusing the Rules of the House by persistently and wilfully obstructing the business of the House, or otherwise, then, if the offence has been committed in the House, the Speaker shall forthwith put the question, on a Motion being made, no amendment, adjournment, or debate being allowed, 'That such Member be suspended from the service of the House during the remainder of that day's sitting;' and, if the offence has been committed in a Committee of the whole House, the Chairman shall, on a Motion being made, put the same question in a similar way, and if the Motion is carried shall forthwith suspend the proceedings of the Committee and report the circumstance to the House; and the Speaker shall thereupon put the same question, without amendment, adjournment, or debate, as if the offence had been committed in the House itself. If any Member be suspended three times in one Session, under this Order, his suspension on the third occasion shall continue for one week, and until a Motion has been made, upon which it shall be decided, at one sitting, by the House, whether the suspension shall then cease, or for what longer period it shall continue; and, on the occasion of such Motion, the Member may, if he desires it, be heard in his place."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: Sir, there is much in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken in which I shall not consider it necessary to follow him. The concluding portion of his observations was chiefly devoted to an examination of some of the details of his proposal, and to criticizing the various Amendments relating to it, of which Notice has been given. I think that it will be desirable that we should, in the first place, confine ourselves to endeavouring to come to some general understanding as to the possibility of adopting some proposal that will be effectual in dealing with the evil sought to be put an end to, leaving the consideration of the details of the Government proposals, and of the Amendments proposed in reference to them, until they more properly come before us. Looking at the first portion of the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman, it is almost unnecessary for me to say that I entirely agree that nothing can be more important, or more worthy of consideration, than the maintenance of that character as a deliberative and legislative Assembly which this House has always preserved. There cannot be for a moment a difference of opinion as to the national nature of the misfortune which would result were the character of the House of Commons to be lowered in the eyes of the nation. The only question as to which there may be some difference of opinion in certain quarters of the House will be as to whether anything which has taken place during the existence of the present Parliament has tended to lower its character; and, if so, to what proceedings the deterioration has been owing, and what is the nature of the remedy which can be best applied to meet the circumstances of the case? I desire to take the earliest opportunity of indicating the course which it is my intention—and, as far as I am able to judge, it is the intention of hon. Members who sit near me—to take in reference to the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman. I intend—and I think they intend—to give a general support to the Resolution of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I give a most cordial support to what I think is the principle of the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman. I take that principle to be this—that in his opinion, and in the opinion of the Government, it is necessary to strengthen and to make more available the powers which the House undoubtedly possesses of enforcing order, and of controlling the conduct of its Members in the course of the transaction of its own Business. That I take to be the principle embodied in the Government Resolution, and to that principle I give my most cordial support. How far I am able to support the details of the Resolution I shall endeavour, in as few words as possible, to make clear to the House. In taking the course I have indicated, I should almost feel myself justified in throwing the whole responsibility of dealing with the matter upon the Government. It is the Government who are charged with guiding the course of Business, and of directing and controlling it in the House. It is the Government who are principally responsible for the conduct of that Business; and I need not say that any proposal of this kind which Her Majesty's Ministers, on their responsibility, think it necessary to make ought to be received by the whole House, and especially by the Opposition, with the greatest deference and attention. When the Government state that, in their opinion, some of the Rules and practices of this House have been proved to be inadequate, and that greater power must be intrusted to the House itself or to its highest authority, the House would be almost justified in accepting that declaration as conclusive, and in throwing the whole responsibility of dealing with the question upon the Government. I do not wish—I do not think it would be fair—to throw upon the Government the whole of that responsibility; and I am prepared to admit that, from what I have seen of the conduct and progress of Business in this House during the past few years, I have arrived at substantially the same conclusion as the Chancellor of the Exchequer: and I am of opinion that, whether the proposal now made does, or does not, embody the right principle to be adopted in altering the Rules of the House, it is necessary that either in the House itself, or in its highest authority, Mr. Speaker, should be placed some greater power than already exists for regulating and controlling the conduct of Members whom the House has been unable, hitherto, adequately to control. I am of opinion that the course which the Government has now taken is the right course. They have come forward on their own responsibility and have made proposals by which, I infer, they mean to stand. I acknowledge it was with some surprise I was given to understand a few days ago that, instead of taking this course, Her Majesty's Government intended to give a general support to a Motion of which Notice had been given by the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate). I was astonished to learn that there was a probability, or even a possibility, of this being the course of the Government; because I thought it showed an inadequate opinion, in the minds of Her Majesty's Ministers, of the gravity and importance of the circumstances with which the House was to be asked to deal. As to the proposals which have now been submitted, I must submit, while supporting them generally, that, in my opinion, they are open to very considerable objection—and it would not have been possible to frame any proposals of the kind which should not be open to some objection—and that some of the objections to which they are open might have been avoided. I shall endeavour, in a spirit both friendly and fair, to point out those objections, and to suggest how they might have been avoided and may be amended. The suggestions and criticisms which I shall offer will be offered for the benefit of Her Majesty's Government and of the House, and will not be proposed by me as alternative Motions. If they do not commend themselves to the approval of the Government or of the majority of the House, I can only say that I will do my best to support the Resolutions as they have been put upon the Paper, and will assist them in any way that may be in my power to try the experiment—for it must, after all, be somewhat in the nature of an experiment—which they are inviting the House to make. Sir, there is another remark which I here wish to make. It seems to me that the course which the Government have taken in this case has been, to a certain extent, a novel one. It has, as far I am aware, been usual in questions affecting the procedure or discipline of the House, or the privileges and conduct of its Members, for the Government not to act, as in other matters, entirely upon their own responsibility, but to take into their counsels the chief officers of the House, and also, generally, the Leaders of the opposite Party. Let the House understand, however, that I am not making the slightest complaint of the departure of the Government on the present occasion from what I believe to have been the ordinary rule and practice. I do not know what has induced the Government to take the course to which I am referring; but I wish to say that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer had any reason to suppose that he would receive less assistance and support from the Opposition in relation to a question of this kind than former Leaders of the House have received from former Oppositions, I most deeply regret that anything should have occurred to give rise to such a supposition. I most emphatically protest that if such a supposition exists in the minds of Members of the Government it is only a supposition; and I must entirely repudiate the idea that anything we have done could legitimately have given rise to such a supposition. We on this side of the House and on this Bench have, from the very commencement of the proceedings which have rendered these proposals necessary, continually urged the Government to take measures for supporting the dignity of the House, and preserving its efficiency as a deliberative and legislative Assembly. In my opinion, the Liberal Party are, if possible, more interested than any others in the preservation of the legislative efficiency of Parliament. We are the Party which is more deeply impressed than any other with the importance of, from time to time, undertaking very large and important legislative measures; it is we who, more frequently than the other side, think it necessary to bring forward very considerable and wide legislative changes; and, surely, it would be a most suicidal policy for such a Party to place in the hands of those who are opposed to all legislation the weapons which would enable them to reduce the legislative power of the House. As I have said, I do not complain of the conduct of the Government on this occasion; on the contrary, I am of opinion, personally, that the course which has been taken is one with which there is every occasion for us to be satisfied, because, in the first place, it enables us—and, indeed, it makes it our duty—to criticize freely the proposals of the Government; and, in the second, it will relieve us from the great responsibility of failure, if, unfortunately, the proposals should fail; while, if our suggestions are not accepted, and the results prove inadequate, we shall have no responsibility on that ground either. Sir, in considering these Resolutions, the House should bear in mind the nature of the proceedings in past years which have rendered them necessary. There is no necessity to impute motives to any Members of the House. There is no necessity to look for any ulterior object in the proceedings which have been complained of; but I regret, on the grounds set forth in my last sentence, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not thought it necessary to lay before the House, in a manner more detailed than that which he has adopted, some account of the nature of the proceedings of which complaint is made—["No, no!"]—and against the recurrence of which these proposals are directed. I observe that my observation has called forth some expressions of dissent from the opposite side; and I will, therefore, point out with what object and in what spirit the observation was made. We have a general idea of the kind and nature of the interruption to which the proceedings of the House have been subjected; but there does not exist in detail an authoritative account of the nature of such proceedings; and however impressed we may be in regard to them—however perfectly acquainted we may be with their character—it is impossible that the public out-of-doors can have an equal acquaintance, and it is also impossible that the future Houses of Parliament should have the same general idea of their nature. Therefore, it would have been desirable if the Chancellor of the Exchequer had laid before us some plain statement of the proceedings which have rendered the Resolutions of the Government necessary. But I suppose it may be said, in a general sense, that what is complained of is, that frequently during the last three or four Sessions, both in matters of legislation and in the consideration of the Estimates, there have been undue delay and undue discussion, and that the Business of the House has been further impeded by there being frequently raised unnecessary subjects of discussion, by which the time of the House has been still further wasted. This, in general terms, is what is understood by Obstruction, and in reference to it the House should remember the steps which have been already taken in order to deal with it. In the Session of 1877—the first in which this became a general subject of remark—the House, on the Motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, passed the following Resolution:—

"That when a Member, after being declared out of Order, shall be pronounced by Mr.

Speaker or by the Chairman of Committees, as the case may be, to be disregarding the authority of the Chair, the debate shall be at once suspended; and on a Motion being made in the House that the Member be not heard during the remainder of the debate or the sitting of the Committee, such Motion, after the Member complained of has been heard in explanation, shall be put without further debate."

That Resolution, I believe, was only put in force on one occasion, and the victim was the late Mr. Whalley. He somewhat inadvertently became a victim; and having, on a subsequent occasion, explained himself to the House, the censure of the House was withdrawn. On another occasion it was attempted to put it in force against the hon. Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell); but in that case it was found inoperative, and no further proceedings were taken. The Resolution was only a Sessional Resolution. It dropped at the end of the Session, and no attempt has since been made to revive it. Now, Sir, some Members of the House may be surprised, perhaps, when I remind them that that was actually the only attempt ever made to deal with the question of Obstruction. In the next Session conduct of the same character was continued—at all events, the same complaints were made as before. In that Session a Committee was appointed to consider the question of the conduct of the Public Business, and it was not the intention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that they should entirely devote themselves to the subject of Obstruction, and, in fact, during the earlier part of their deliberation they never considered the subject at all; but towards the close of their sittings, the circumstances of the House induced the Chancellor of the Exchequer to propose to extend the Inquiry, and the Committee did take into consideration the subject of Obstruction, and examined certain witnesses in reference to it and the undue delay which was caused in their proceedings, and they passed a Resolution and made a Report on the subject. That Report was laid before the House; but no action was taken upon it during that Session. In the next Session the Chancellor of the Exchequer placed upon the Paper certain proposals based upon the recommendations of the Committee, and among them was one dealing with the question of Obstruction. There was considerable delay in the passing of the first Resolution; and although the second, and the other Resolutions, including that which dealt with Obstruction, remained on the Paper for some time in the name of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, it never was moved, and the House was not invited to take any measure whatever for the purpose of dealing with this question. Therefore, Sir, during the Sessions of 1877, 1878, and 1879, when, according to universal agreement, we have been suffering under this inconvenience, no action whatever was taken either by the Government or by any Member to invite the attention of the House to it. I can well understand that, under these circumstances, the hon. Member for Longford (Mr. Justin M'Carthy) may argue with considerable force that, after the House has endured so much and so long without thinking it necessary to take any action in the matter, it is somewhat unreasonable that in the last Session of the Parliament, when nothing I may say of pronounced Obstruction has taken place ——["Oh!"] Well, I am only taking the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman invited us to consider the subject when we were calm, and when our attention was not taken up by proceedings of an obstructive character during the present Session; and therefore it may be argued with some force, that is not reasonable, under these circumstances, in the last Session of the Parliament, to ask us to deal with this subject when it was not brought forward in previous Sessions, when the subject was more prominent, and when the House suffered much more inconvenience from it, but when nothing was done. I do not know what argument the hon. Member may put forward; but I think he may found a very plausible argument on that fact. But, Sir, I do not agree with that view of the case; and for myself I think, if the House has any reason to complain, it has reason to complain that action in the matter has been delayed too long, rather than that it should be taken now. For my part, I attach the greatest importance to what may be the effect upon a future Parliament of the continuance of this practice of Obstruction if no step whatever is taken by the present in reference to it. Evils such as those which are now complained of have, in my opinion, a very strong tendency to grow; and there is every reason to apprehend that a future Parliament may suffer the same or even aggravated grievances; and it would be very unfair if it could be pointed out that this Parliament suffered during half its existence those grievances and did not make one single attempt to redress them. I have now, Sir, to examine very shortly the Resolution itself. The House will observe that the assumption on which it proceeds is that the evil that is complained of, that inconvenience and delay which have been caused by the action of a few Members of the House, may be cured by proceedings of a personal character directed against one or two or, at any rate, a very small number of Members—that what is rongw may be cured by proceedings of a personal and partly penal character. The Resolution deals substantially with two questions, and I must say I think it would be better if it had been divided into two parts. The first proposal is one which provides a similar proceeding to that which was before adopted to enable the House to relieve itself during the progress of debate from undue obstruction or delay in a summary manner. The second part proposes a proceeding of a more penal character, and provides for the more permanent punishment of a Member who has come under the operation of the first part of the Resolution; and I think that these proposals could have been very conveniently separated, and more conveniently considered in the shape of two Resolutions. With respect to the principle of the first part of the Resolution, it has my most warm support. It is, in substance, as has been stated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Resolution which was agreed to by a majority of the Committee of 1878. I think it is open to consideration whether, in the opinion of the House, the machinery proposed by Her Majesty's Government is that which is calculated to be most efficient. Any hon. Member who has read the evidence of Mr. Speaker before the Committee will have observed that the Speaker was in favour rather of placing the whole initiative in himself, or in the Chairman of Ways and Means, than of leaving it in the hands of the House. But in the Resolution now before us, the House will observe that when the Speaker has named a Member the matter is left to be decided by the majority of the House. Now, it appears to me that it is questionable whether there is any advantage whatever to be obtained from the proposed action of the House itself. The Government are of opinion, contrary to that entertained by the hon. Member for North Warwickshire, that that is a power too great to be placed in the hands of any one individual, supported by the majority of, perhaps, an excited House; but they have very properly provided that the proceeding shall not come into operation at all until the initiative has been taken by the Speaker or the Chairman of Ways and Means, who shall name a Member as guilty of wilful Obstruction. Where, then, is the necessity for bringing in the action of the House at all? When the Speaker has named a Member as guilty of Obstruction, and the matter is placed under the consideration of the House, it will not merely be the conduct of the Member which will be brought under review, but the conduct of the Speaker also. It would not be possible for the House to refuse to assent to the Motion without, in effect, passing a Vote of Censure upon the Speaker. I cannot but think that something of dignity is taken away from the character of the proceeding by requesting a vote of the majority of the House, and not leaving it nominally, as well as practically, in the hands of the Speaker himself. I may be told that this proposal is the recommendation of the Committee, and that I was a party to it; but, in reply, I am bound to state that the recommendation of the Government is not precisely that of the Committee, and that they have left out a very important part of that recommendation. The Committee recommended that before a vote should be taken the Member whose conduct was inculpated should be allowed to explain for a period not exceeding 10 minutes. Well, I am not by any means clear that that is a very wise proceeding; but, at all events, it was intended to give the particular Member a *locus pœnitentiæ*. It might be, on the one hand, that the conduct of the Member would be shown to have been such as to justify the Speaker or the Chairman of Ways and Means in having named him for wilful Obstruction or other offence. On the other hand, the explanation of the Member might be in the nature of a submission to the House. He might throw himself upon the generosity of the

House, and express his intention no longer to offend against the Rules of the House. Under these circumstances, it would have been open to the House, without passing a Vote of Censure upon the Speaker, to take the side of mercy, and decide that after the explanation they would refrain from inflicting a penalty. But in the case of a Motion without explanation the House has no option but to express its opinion upon it, and that, too, when necessarily a large number of hon. Members who were called upon to pronounce sentence could not be cognizant of the offence; because the Speaker or the Chairman of Ways and Means was the only person who could possibly, from the necessity of the case, be cognizant of all that had taken place; and if it is the intention of the Government to strengthen their hands, I think that it could be more effectually done by placing the necessary power in their hands, and not by delegating it to the majority of the House. Well, Sir, the second part of the Resolution appears to me to be open to very considerably greater objection. It contemplates a procedure of a penal character. I am quite of opinion that some proceeding of that kind is necessary. I do not think it could be tolerated that any Member or Members should from day to day render himself or themselves liable to the proceeding provided by the first part of the Resolution, and yet continue the next day and the next to repeat the offence without being in some way punished. I think after a certain number of times it is necessary that the displeasure of the House should be manifested against a Member in some permanent manner. How that is to be done is a question of a very difficult character, and it is one which is not satisfactorily solved by the proposals of the Government. The suggestion that the suspension after these offences should be continued for one week appears to me a great deal too slight. That a Member, in spite of warning—for I contemplate that this procedure will never take place until ample warning is given by the Speaker—should during one Session be guilty three times of conduct of such a character that the Speaker would be forced to name him and submit his conduct to the judgment of the House—that conduct of that kind should only be visited by suspension for one week appears to be a penalty much too slight. I am quite aware that it is proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the penalty may be extended after discussion in the House, and, in fact, would be permanent unless removed by a vote of the House; but what I wish to point out is that in punishing the offender the House is invited to punish itself much more severely. At the expiration of one week it is competent for any friend—any political friend—of the suspended Member to bring forward his case before the House. It will be competent for any friend to move that the suspension be removed; and, as I understand that such a question would be a question of Privilege, it would be one that the House would be bound at the expiration of a week to take up and discuss. The Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes that it should be discussed in a single Sitting. Now, that is a detail that I do not wish to take up the time of the House in discussing at the present moment; but I wish to observe that this is an innovation—an entire innovation, perfectly unknown to our proceedings. What is one Sitting of the House? It is not necessarily confined to a single day. It is possible that this procedure may be prolonged over one, two, or more days, without the possibility of adjourning, however grave the case might be. That, however, is a matter of detail, which I do not wish to discuss now; but what I do wish to point out is that this procedure provides for the time of the House being taken up and wasted by the conduct of a Member, and that time will be further taken up during a Sitting, or a part of a Sitting, at the expiration of one week after the offence has been committed. Now, it seems to me the punishment must be self-acting, and if self-acting the penal consequences must be self-acting. The punishment must be more severe than proposed; or else, if it is thought necessary that some inquiry should be made into the circumstances and the punishment made proportionate to the offence, then the House must obtain some assistance to meet the case, and to avoid the waste of time involved in the discussing of the case at the end of a week. A suggestion was made some time ago, before this subject of Obstruction came up for discussion, by my hon. Friend the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread). He proposed that at the commencement of each Session a Committee of Order should be appointed. The object of that Committee was not to deal with the question of Obstruction, because, as I have said, Obstruction was not then heard of. The proposal was, as well as I recollect, that this Committee should assist the Speaker in the consideration of questions of Order and Privilege. The idea has also been taken up by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Liskeard (Mr. Courtney), and he proposes that the conduct of Members who have subjected themselves to warning from the Chair should come under the consideration of a Committee of this kind. I must say that it does seem to me that if the penalty cannot be made self-acting and more severe it would be very desirable that the intervention of some such body should be brought into play, and that the conduct of a Member who has more than once offended should, as a matter of course, come under the consideration of such a Committee as this, and that the Committee should make a Report to the House and advise as to the course to be taken. At all events, it seems to me we must hit on some plan less cumbrous and irksome to the House itself, less productive of waste of time than the proposal of the Government, which will necessarily involve the loss of a considerable portion of the time of the Session on debates on the conduct of Members. I will not dwell upon the details of the proposals any further; but, before I sit down, I cannot help expressing a doubt which I feel in my mind as to the efficiency of any proceedings of this character at all. I am very well aware of the prevailing feeling of the House, to which expression has been given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that Obstruction is best dealt with by proceedings of a personal character of this nature, and it is unnecessary to consider any more general alteration of our Rules of debate. But I think the House ought not to be too easily led away by any Motion of this kind. These proceedings cannot, in my opinion, be of a merely personal character. However much we may wish to give them that character, they must, to a certain extent, modify the liberty, the freedom of action hitherto enjoyed by minorities, and especially by very small minorities; and, however much we may desire to avoid it, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that by proceedings of this kind—necessary as I think they are—we shall, to some degree, restrict the freedom of action hitherto enjoyed by small minorities; and the effect of Rules of this description will be greatest, not on those who wish to defy and delay the House, but on those who have the greatest respect for its authority. I think it is impossible not to see that after these Rules have been passed the conduct of a small minority will, to a certain extent, be restricted; and that Members who feel the greatest respect for the authority of the House will be very apt to be visited before they go near straining the Forms of the House in what they consider legitimate opposition to a measure to which they strongly object. I am not arguing against proceedings of this kind. I am pointing out that no measure of this kind can be purely personal in its operation, but that it must exercise a considerable effect on the conduct of small minorities in the House. Well, then, the question is, if it has become necessary to restrict, to some extent, the freedom of debate and the liberty of action of small minorities, whether it may not be worth while to go a little further and do something which certainly will be more effective, and which will not really be in practice more oppressive or invidious than the present proposal. Every other Assembly has had to consider this problem, and every other Assembly has adopted the power, after a certain time, to put a stop to debate. The Chancellor of the Exchequer referred to this question, and he said that the House would hesitate long before it adopted any such measure. I quite agree with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that you cannot at all defend the adoption of the *clôture* in this House; but when considering this question the House will do well to remember that this is a proceeding to which in time you will be forced to come, and that it is a proceeding which would undoubtedly be efficient for the purpose for which it would be intended. I think the consciousness that we have this power in reserve ought to enable us to discuss this question with much calmness and consideration. If the majority should be of opinion that the evils and inconveniences under which the House has suffered for the past three or four years can be met by measures of a personal and penal character, such as now proposed, I am perfectly willing to give to those proposals a fair trial, and to assist Her Majesty's Government and the House to the utmost of my power to put them into a practical and workmanlike shape. But at the same time, as I have said, I cannot help thinking that there is much probability that no measure of this kind will be permanently or completely successful. We ought to bear in mind that we have in reserve a simpler and more effectual means of proceeding. At all events, let us not adopt any hasty or ill-conceived measures—measures which might, if adopted without sufficient consideration, become oppressive, or might lead the House into a series of personal debates and great waste of time. I am sorry to have detained the House so long; but my observations have not been made in a spirit of factious opposition, but in order to point out some objections which might be urged against the proposals of the Government, and rather to increase their practical efficiency than to oppose the Motion.

MR. NEWDEGATE said, that as the noble Marquess opposite (the Marquess of Hartington) had made reference to the Motion which he (Mr. Newdegate) had placed on the Paper, it was due to the House that he should explain the reasons for his having taken upon himself the office of pioneer in dealing with this question. Although the House appointed a Committee on the state of Public Business in 1878, which had received evidence and reported, the Report scarcely alluded to the new Parliamentary offence "Obstruction." It appeared as though no one was prepared to submit a proposal to the House respecting it. He had, moreover, received information that, so far from the course of Obstruction which had been adopted being abandoned, it was likely to be renewed in the present Session. Indeed, he might say that already there had been some indications of an intention to renew that course of Obstruction; and he was afraid that there was nothing in the circumstances of the House to justify the hope that, if nothing were done, Business would be more facilitated in the present than in the past three Sessions. He was happy to believe, however, that the House had come to the conclusion that some measure was absolutely necessary. The question now before the House was, what measures should be adopted, and he rejoiced most sincerely that the Leader of the House had found it to be consistent with his duty to make a proposal to the House. He rejoiced still more at finding that the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition agreed with the Leader of the House. It would be a total departure on the part of the noble Lord from the traditions of the Party of Progress; it would be a total departure from the history of his own family; it would be a total departure from the precedents set by those who had preceded him in the Leadership of the Liberal Party, if the noble Lord failed to support the Leader of the House in providing for the due despatch of the Business of the House. Having sat with the noble Lord on the Committee of 1878, he had never for one moment suspected the noble Lord of failing to pursue the traditions of his house, and of the Party which he led in that House. Allusion had been made to the difficulties which had induced the House to appoint that Committee; and he thought it was as well that some Member of the House should, as shortly as possible, describe the nature of those difficulties. They were, indeed, pretty generally known throughout the country. At the same time, that which was not generally known was that these difficulties had been created during the last three Sessions by a number of hon. Members who, as far as he had been able to analyze the subject, had never exceeded 18; he might, indeed, say that the great difficulties which had arrested the progress of the House of Commons in conducting the legislation which was necessary for the United Kingdom and the government of Her Majesty's Empire had really been created by a number of Members who did not exceed 10 or 11. Now, those were facts which ought to be stated in that House, or their proceedings might be misconstrued out-of-doors. He had taken the part of pioneer in the matter, and having done so, he wished to recall to the House the fact that, being now one of its senior Members, from first to last he had ever defended the rights of minorities. The rights reserved to individual Members of the House, and the rights reserved to the minorities of the House, formed its proud distinctions, and made the House of Commons superior to every Legislative Assembly in the world. In the preservation of the rights of its individual Members, and in the preservation of the rights of its minorities, was to be found the distinction of the House of Commons as superior in its deliberate capacity to any Assembly that had not acted upon or had departed from its Rules. Let the House remember this—the Legislative Assembly of France, the Congress of the United States of America, and the Parliaments of our Colonies had founded their order of proceedings originally on the model of this House; but he was sorry to say that the Legislature of the United States had departed from that wholesome form of procedure, so likewise had the Legislative Assembly of France; and if we might judge from what occurred in their debates—and he wished to speak of those great Assemblies respectfully—their order and conduct were far inferior to that which prevailed in this great prototype of deliberative Assemblies—the House of Commons. He felt that it was a bold attempt on the part of any private Member to take upon himself the duty of a pioneer in a matter of that sort; but he had weighed the responsibility he had incurred, and, for some time, he had had reason to believe that the Leader of the House approved of the principle of the proposal which stood on the Notice Paper in his name. But although he was happy to find that the principle of his proposal was to some extent embodied in that of the right hon. Gentleman, there were distinct and grave differences between the two proposals. He was not in the least surprised that the right hon. Gentleman should claim his proper position, and propose a Resolution not merely as the organ of the Government, but in his capacity of Leader of the House, with the view of restoring the Order which had been broken, and of correcting the new abuse, which he (Mr. Newdegate) was sorry to say had of late years grown up. With these few words of apology to the House, he would venture to read an opinion which, though it might not find audible utterance in that House, was an opinion upon recent proceedings in the House of Commons, which, coming as it did from the author of *The Practice of Parliament*, must command, not only in the House, but out of it, a weight that could attach to the opinions of very few Members of the House. In his recent edition of this work, published at the end of 1879, Sir Thomas Erskine May thus wrote—

> "The Rules of Parliament are designed to afford every legitimate opportunity of discussion, to insure reasonable delays in the passing of important measures, and to guard the rights of minorities. In the observance of these Rules, both Houses have displayed a generous regard for the liberty of individual Members and of political Parties; freedom of debate has been respected with rare patience and self-denial. Nowhere have the principles of liberty and toleration been more conspicuously illustrated than within the walls of Parliament. On some memorable occasions the power of a majority has been withstood by a resolute minority supported by public opinion. But, of late, these salutary Rules have been strained and perverted, in the House of Commons, for purposes of obstruction. Such a course, if persisted in, would frustrate the power and authority of Parliament, and secure the domination of a small minority, condemned by the deliberate judgment of the House and of the country. That it is un-Parliamentary and opposed to the principles of orderly government is manifest, and on the 25th day of July, 1877, it was declared by the Speaker that any Member wilfully and persistently obstructing Public Business without just and reasonable cause, is guilty of a contempt of the House, and would be liable to such punishment, whether by censure, by suspension from the service of the House, or by commitment, as the House may adjudge."

The occasion was not light which elicited that declaration from the Chair; and he would, as briefly as he could, recall to the attention of the House some of the occurrences of 1877. He wished particularly to call attention to the effect produced upon public opinion by this system of Obstruction. *The Times* newspaper published a *Register of Events*. In that Register the leading occurrences in this House are recorded; and the following events appeared with reference to the Session of 1877:—

> "Monday, July 2.—House of Commons.—Debate on Army Estimates. Irish obstruction by five members; seventeen divisions. House sat till seven in the morning.
>
> "Thursday, July 5.—Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) Bill Debates. Scene with the Irish Obstructionists and Mr. Whalley.
>
> "Tuesday, July 24.—Debate on the South Africa Bill. Obstruction by Mr. Parnell.
>
> "Wednesday, July 25.—Committee on the South Africa Bill. Scene with the Irish Members. Mr. Parnell ordered to withdraw from the House.
>
> "Friday, July 27.—Resolution of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to prevent obstruction adopted.
>
> "Monday, July 30.—Committee on South Africa Bill. Scene with the Irish Members, Messrs. O'Donnell and Biggar.

"Tuesday, July 31.—Committee on South Africa Bill. Obstruction by Irish Members. Sitting of the House through the night.

"Wednesday, August 1.—South Africa Bill. Obstruction by the Irish Members. Sitting of the House from four o'clock on Tuesday to six o'clock on Wednesday (twenty-six hours).

"Thursday, August 9.—Mr. Whalley suspended from debate by the new Rule."

That short abstract showed, he thought, that public opinion had not been kept totally ignorant of the circumstances in which the House had been placed. In the following Session, 1878, the Committee on Public Business was appointed; and he was not at all prepared to impugn the statement of the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition with respect to what occurred in that Committee. He (Mr. Newdegate) had been mainly instrumental in furnishing the House with a list of the small minorities by which the Business of the House had been impeded. The Committee were pleased to adopt the calculation which he had presented, and ordered them to be examined by the officers of the House, by whom they were found correct; but, strange to say—and for this he could not account—the Committee declined to give the totals to the House. With the permission of the House, then, he would now, for the first time, read these totals, to illustrate the fact to which he alluded. The following was an analysis of the published Division Lists of the House, in which the minorities did not exceed 21:—During the Session 1876, there were 40 such divisions. In 1877 there were 101 such divisions. In 1878, to April 16, there were 29 such divisions—making a total of 170 divisions, in the minorities shown by which the under-mentioned Members took part:—Of 170 divisions in which the minority was under 21, the hon. Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell) was in 121; the hon. and gallant Member for Galway (Major Nolan) was in 111; the hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) in 107; the hon. and gallant Member for Waterford (Major O'Gorman) in 75; the hon. Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell) in 73; the hon. Member for Mayo (Mr. O'Connor Power) in 65; the hon. Member for Waterford City (Mr. R. Power) in 56. But the analysis went further. There were divisions in which the minorities had not exceeded 11 Members—in the Session 1876 there were 20 such divisions; in 1877, 69 such divisions; and in 1878, to April 16, 8 such divisions. Of these 97 divisions the hon. Member for Meath was in 80; the hon. and gallant Member for Galway in 69; the hon. Member for Cavan in 57; the hon. Member for Dungarvan in 48; the hon. Member for Mayo in 48; the hon. Member for Waterford City in 46; the other hon. and gallant Member for Waterford in 26. He had produced those figures in order to show the House how small had been the band which had practised this form of Obstruction. The Committee of 1878 having been appointed, there ensued a change of tactics on the part of those Members who were thus endangering the privileges of minorities in that House by the extent to which they had abused these privileges. He now came to another period, when he could show the House that it had suffered from the abuse of the privileges of individual Members. The same hon. Members to whom he had alluded thenceforth adopted another form of abuse and annoyance. He came to the period of what he would call the *cacoethes loquendi*. Taking the last Session, 1879, he had ascertained from the Index to *Hansard's Debates* that the hon. Member for Meath addressed the House 500 times; the hon. and gallant Member for Galway, 369 times; the hon. Member for Dungarvan, 284 times; the hon. Member for Mayo, 135 times. It was highly important that the public and the constituencies should know that, if the House had been obliged to adopt penal legislation for the purpose of enforcing respect for its Forms, it was on account of the persistent misconduct—for he could not otherwise describe it—of a small knot of hon. Members who never numbered more than a dozen and a-half. It was important that the country should not misunderstand what had occurred in that House. That which had occurred during the last three Sessions was more discreditable to the House than anything within his experience of the 35 years that he had occupied a seat in the House. As an old and attached Member of the House, no man would be more ready to assert the rights and privileges of individual Members, and of minorities in the House; but he could not sanction these extreme abuses of their Forms and Rules. Never having been in office during his 35 years of service in the House, but proud and content to be simply a private and independent Member of the House, he would be the last to make its Rules unduly penal, and would resist any attack upon the rights and privileges of individual Members and minorities. He had seen, however, the very existence of other Legislative Assemblies endangered by excess; and he plainly saw that the excesses practised by a persistent, though small, minority in this House were endangering the rights and privileges of individual Members of the House, and the rights and privileges of minorities. The deliberative character of the House was in danger if nothing was done to prevent these abuses, and nothing need be done that was inconsistent with the principles of the existing Rules and Orders of the House; but, if nothing were done, it was inevitable that they should come to the adoption of the *clôture*, which, wherever it had been adopted, had failed to restrain the excesses of debate, for, in 1848, M. Guizot, in giving evidence before a Committee with reference to the *clôture* in the French Assembly, said that it was ineffectual to restrain the excesses of debate, and that debates on the same subject had, in the French Assembly, lasted for more than a fortnight. But that system operated to prevent the almost conversational mode of procedure by which, especially in Committees of the Whole House, the deliberative character of the House of Commons had been so vindicated as to raise it in that respect high above the position occupied by any other deliberative Assembly in the world. He should not much longer detain the House; but he thought it important that the facts to which he had alluded should be brought to its notice; and as they were about to return to their constituents, that they should—that the constituencies also should—know the reason of their action; and that, far from intending to impair or lessen the freedom of debate, or to change the character of the House of Commons, if they were forced to measures of this kind now before the House, it was not with a view to the supersession of the deliberative character of the House, not with a view to limit its functions or lower its dignity, but with the view of preserving those great characteristics which had raised it so high above every other representative and Constitutional Assembly in existence that they acted. Having thus placed before the House the circumstances which had induced him to assume the office of pioneer in the matter, he wished to say that, in some respects, he did not cordially approve of the Resolutions which had been proposed by the Leader of the House. The proud distinction of the House had hitherto been that, except by courtesy, the Members of that House were all equal. Another distinction of the House had hitherto been—which had operated as a guarantee for its being fit to occupy the high position it had attained in securing the liberties and the social order of the great centre of the British Empire—was that the House of Commons had hitherto, by its own power, by the public spirited co-operation of its Members, secured not only the decency, but the expedition and the efficiency of its own proceedings. It was thus that the House had become the great exemplar of self-government—of a self-government so conducted that, while it insured political and social order, guarded the foundations of freedom. That had been the proud function of the House of Commons; and he thought, as must be obvious from the proposal which he had ventured to place on the Notice Book, which had been remarked upon by the Leader of the Opposition, that it appeared to him that the Resolutions proposed by the Government unnecessarily invoked the authority of the Speaker. Hitherto, he had seldom known a Speaker compelled to "name" a Member. The meaning of that proceeding, according to his (Mr. Newdegate's) apprehension, was this—that in addressing a Member of the House, not as a Member for a certain constituency, but by his own individual name, the Speaker expressed an opinion that that Member so named had, by his conduct, forfeited his right to be considered a Member of the House. That was the inference which, from some study of the proceedings of the House, he believed to be the true interpretation of what was meant by the Speaker's naming a Member; but he must say that, when the only consequence of naming a Member was to be suspension from service, in the first instance, for one Sitting of the House only—it might be for an hour or less—he did not think that the penalty was adequate to the offence of persistent obstruction. He remembered the Resolution which was carried at the instance of the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the end of the Session of 1877. It was a very charitable modification of the then existing Rules, and in the result it was found utterly futile and quite useless for the intended purpose. The consequence of the adoption and failure of that Resolution was the appointment of the Committee of 1878 to seek for, and, if possible, to recommend some more effectual disciplinary proposal; but when the recommendations of that Committee came before the House, they were so multifarious, and so totally deficient in remedies for the evil of Obstruction, that only one of these Resolutions was adopted by the House; the first, which gave the Government the advantage of having Monday for their Business. The only Resolution of the Committee of 1878 which purported to deal with Obstruction was carried by the casting vote of its author—the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as Chairman—and was never till now proposed to the House. It was not to the credit of the House to adopt measures so inefficient that they only led to an aggravation of the offence. It should not be forgotten that the Resolution of 1877 was adopted on the 27th of July, and that on the night of the 31st of July and the morning of August 1st, 1877, they had had the melancholy spectacle of the majority of the House trying, during 26 consecutive hours, to wear out a small minority by mere exhibition of physical force. Could anything have been more miserable? On that occasion, he bore his part with the majority. Except for one hour only he was present during the entire 26 hours. But when he afterwards reflected upon what the House had been doing he came to the conclusion that, with all their labour, while they risked the health of the Speaker, of the Chairman of Committees, and of the officers of the House, the course they had adopted was not worthy of the House. When he was told that they would be driven to the *clôture*, or something equivalent to it, in order that the House might duly exercise its functions, he did not believe it. In a great emergency he had seen the power of supending the Standing Orders brought into use. On one occasion he saw an Attorney General come down to the House and notice the presence of Strangers, who were then ordered to withdraw. He had given notice of a Bill, but he had not brought it in. The Attorney General then told the House that he had found a defect in the Acts by which parts of the dioceses of this country had been re-distributed, and that that defect would invalidate the title to a vast amount of property, since testamentary jurisdiction was then vested in the Diocesan Courts, and that unless the House passed an Act in a single day thousands of innocent persons might be beggared, and the greatest confusion prevail throughout the country. That Attorney General was Sir John, afterwards Chief Justice, Jervis; he added that the House of Lords were sitting ready to take up the Bill. In two hours and three-quarters after the suspension of the Standing Orders, an Act was thus passed through both Houses, and became law by the Royal Assent being given to it the same evening. He trusted, then, that should such abuses as those of the 31st of July and the 1st of August, 1877, be again attempted, that hon. Members would never again be dragged through such a scene as occurred in 1877, but that, should the occasion require it, the Leader of the House would move the adjournment of the debate, and give Notice that on the next day he would call upon the House to suspend the Standing Orders. With that suspension, every restraint upon the power of the majority would vanish. Thus, they had all the power of the *clôture* at their command, and more than that of the *clôture*, to remedy any abuse or meet any emergency. And as the suspension of the Standing Orders must be a totally exceptional proceeding, for the adoption of which the House must be conscious of the absolute necessity—thus, in the case of Obstruction, such exceptional necessity must be proved before there could be any interference with the rights and privileges of individual Members, or of minorities, or anything done which would be injurious to the deliberative character of the House. In conclusion, he felt that, having acted as pioneer on this subject, and so incurred a great responsibility, he was under an obligation, as an individual Member of the House, to state the facts which had induced him to undertake that responsibility.

Mr. DILLWYN, who had given Notice of an Amendment, said, he was anxious to address the House early in the debate, because he was misunderstood and misrepresented in the Press with regard to the course which he intended to take. He objected to the second Resolution; but never for a moment did he intend to oppose the Resolution before the House. He thought it better, however, not to convert any Resolution on this subject into a Standing Order; and he hoped he should be able to offer reasons for that opinion which might be satisfactory to the Government and the House. He desired, like the noble Lord (the Marquess of Hartington), to act in a friendly, not a hostile, spirit to the Resolution they were then discussing. He agreed with a great deal of what had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the noble Lord the Member for the Radnor Boroughs. He concurred with the noble Lord the Member for the Radnor Boroughs in thinking it inexpedient that the whole House should determine in each case what constituted a Breach of Order. Such questions were, in his (Mr. Dillwyn's) opinion, too delicate to be dealt with in that manner, and were always matters of extreme difficulty. In all the instances of Obstruction—and the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) had rather confused Obstruction with Breach of Order—the issue had been between the majority and the minority; and, therefore, in every case referred to the decision of the whole House, the majority had to decide in its own favour. As the noble Lord had said, if such cases were submitted to the decision of the whole House, the greater part of the House would be called in, and would not be cognizant of what had taken place. This consideration made him in favour of the Resolution of the hon. Member for Liskeard (Mr. Courtney), according to which a Committee of Order would be appointed at the beginning of each Session. That course, he thought, would be by far the most satisfactory that could be adopted. It had so happened that of late years obstruction had always come from his own side of the House, because they had been in a minority; but his (Mr. Dillwyn's) early lessons in obstruction had been received from hon. Members on the opposite Benches. He was not an adept in the art; but what instruction he had had was given by hon. Members now on the Treasury Bench. The hon. Member for North Warwickshire's retrospect ought to have gone further back, and should have traced the origin of Obstruction. He (Mr. Dillwyn) would mention the details of one case. On June 17, 1870, a Clerical Disabilities Bill was before the House. The first division that was taken showed 99 for the Bill and 47 against it, several Members of the present Government voting in the minority. A contest then ensued on Motions for adjournment, during which 10 divisions were taken, till the small, or rather the large, hours of the morning. In the first eight divisions the numbers ranged from 66 to 74 against 24 to 30, and in that small minority he found the names of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Cross), the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. J. Lowther), who was always an able Obstructionist, the hon. Member for North Lincolnshire (Mr. Winn), and the hon. Gentleman the Chairman of Committees (Mr. Raikes). In the ninth division the numbers were 66 to 21, and the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department had abandoned the contest. The tenth and last division showed the same figures; but the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland had by that time become very much dissatisfied with the manner in which the obstruction had been conducted, and, therefore, left his Friends, to vote with the majority. The hon. Gentleman the Chairman of Committees, however, to the last, voted with the minority. He merely cited this case in justice to hon. Members on that side of the House, and to show that they had not been the authors or the first practisers of Obstruction. With regard to the *clôture*, he trusted that there was no sort of possibility of its being adopted, and that any such proposal would meet with the most determined opposition. The propositions of the Government were, on the whole, not very objectionable, and might be amended. He believed he could say, on behalf of many hon. Members on that side of the House who had never been guilty of wilful and persistent obstruction, that their disinclination to accept interference with the procedure of the House led them to view with regret the necessity of some such Resolutions as those now proposed. They had feared that the privileges of private Members and the rights of minorities might be impaired; but now that the authorities of the House had taken up the question they would give them all the assistance in their power. They were always anxious to repress any Breach of Order; and although it was true that sometimes they supported several of their Irish Friends below the Gangway when, perhaps, their proceedings were not very orderly, yet that was, if he might say so without offence, when they considered those Friends were unduly attacked and unduly bullied by hon. Gentlemen on the other side.

MR. FINIGAN said, that as one of the hon. Members who had several Amendments upon the Paper he wished to call attention to some of the amenities of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman had said that the House was governed by a fixed set of Rules, and yet, in the same breath, had proposed to alter them to the detriment of the Party with which he (Mr. Finigan) had the honour to be connected. However, though that was the object of the right hon. Gentleman, he cordially supported the principles enunciated by him; but he must say for himself and them that they had never been guilty of wilful Obstruction. The Party to which he belonged had a very great duty to perform—namely, to remedy the mode in which Irish legislation was conducted.

MR. SPEAKER said, that the hon. Member (Mr. Finigan) had given Notice of an Amendment to the Resolution of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and he (Mr. Speaker) might, therefore, remind the hon. Member that if he spoke at that time he would be precluded by the Rules of the House from moving his Amendment at a later period of the debate. If the hon. Gentleman desired to speak now, the House was willing to hear him; but if he did so, he would, as he (Mr. Speaker) had said, lose his right to speak later on.

MR. FINIGAN thanked the right hon. Gentleman for his correction, and said that, in that case, he should prefer to address the House in moving his Amendment.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

MR. JUSTIN M'CARTHY, who had given Notice of an Amendment to the effect—

> "That it would be inexpedient to attempt to introduce new Rules for the conduct of Business at a time so near to the end of the present Parliament,"

said, that he had taken that course entirely on his own responsibility, and not as a Member of any Party. At the request of many Members of his own Party, he had forborne from pressing the Amendment, it being their opinion that there ought not to be any opposition to the Resolutions which might seem to have the effect of delaying their passage, and having heard the reasons of the Government for proposing them he had yielded to the opinion of the Members of his Party and had withdrawn his Amendment. Still, he must say that, if he represented not an Irish but an English constituency, he should feel bound to oppose these Resolutions at such a time in the life of the Parliament as the present. He saw, however, no reason why their adoption should be made the subject of a struggle for life or death. He confessed that there was about them one satisfactory condition—they did not strike at the privileges of a minority. Had they done so, he should certainly have felt bound to offer them the strongest and most persistent opposition. There was that to be said in their favour, that they struck not at a minority, however small, but at the individual Member. But, notwithstanding that, he objected to them for more than one reason. They were not in themselves very important Resolutions, and he did not believe they would produce any serious or considerable change in the manner of carrying on the Business of the House of Commons. They interfered, however, with the relations of the House and the Speaker, with those of a Member and his constituency, and with those of one Parliamentary Party and another, and, indeed, he should hardly have thought it possible to introduce into so small a compass so many alterations in the relations which had hitherto subsisted between the Speaker and the House. If carried out with great stringency, and under a Speaker less impartial than the present Speaker, it was possible to conceive that they might introduce serious, and even fundamental, alterations in the Parliamentary system. For the first time, the House had a system of penal clauses to be applied to Members of Parliament. For the first time, the Speaker had the right given him to become the moving power for the punishment of Members of that House. The Resolutions made the Speaker something more than the mouthpiece, they made him the President of that Assembly. They gave him an initiative. Circumstances might arise which should render even such a change desirable. But it was not desirable at the close of a Parliament, when the authority of the House was weakened by the prospect of early extinction. It was a serious change to make for the first time in Parliamentary history, that a Motion might be made which was not to be discussed, and over which, from beginning to end, all right of debate was taken away. He had heard no argument as yet which showed that a condition of things had arrived which rendered such a course necessary; and if it had it could not be satisfactory to make the change during the closing days of a Parliament. It was said that a man had the right to make a will. That was undoubtedly so, although they were living at a time when it was rather sought to restrict the power of the "dead hand." But the dying man must be the owner of that over which he exercised the disposing power. Here the analogy failed. The present House was not an owner in that sense. It was, finally, a most serious innovation that a Member of that House might be suspended, not for a week, but rather for an indefinite period, from the exercise of his functions; might, for the first time, be degraded to a lower rank than his Colleagues, and held there until a majority of the House should intervene to restore him. He should like a much greater time to have been given to the consideration of such changes. It was, moreover, strange that the especial reason given by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer should be that there was no cause just now to complain of Obstruction; that they were in a calm and temperate mood. Then arose the question as to whether the new Rules were to be a Standing Order of the House. Into the minute bearings of the question he would not go for the present. They would be discussed hereafter; but he could hardly believe that the Government would refuse to yield to the Amendment that was proposed upon that matter. Admitting that it might be reasonable enough to adopt these Resolutions for the current Session, the next Parliament should surely be left the power to judge for itself how best to conduct its affairs. Although the Resolutions would introduce a great many serious changes into our Parliamentary system, he did not think they were accompanied by any very great hope that they would necessarily be successful in the object which was the excuse for their presentation. If there really existed in the House, as was stated, an organized and determined system for the Obstruction of Public Business, the Resolutions, when passed, would not in the slightest degree interfere with the worst operations of such a system. In fact, if there were that determination amongst Members of the House, the Resolutions would rather afford them opportunity than deny them occasion. Anyone could see that when the Estimates were being considered in Committee a determined Obstruction of Business could be carried on, in spite of the Resolutions, in a way that no Government could venture fairly to describe as deliberate Obstruction. It would be almost impossible to say what really was the motive of an hon. Member who insisted on submitting to the critical judgment of the House every item in the Estimates. The adoption of such a course was advocated by Joseph Hume, and recommended to every Member. It was clear that a Member might, with perfect good faith, insist upon examining every clause in a Bill in Committee, and suggesting Amendments in almost every line. Was it not easy to imagine a heated majority, impatient of any delay, insisting on treating a Member who was only performing his duty as one guilty of wilful obstruction? Such conduct on the part of a majority might be naturally expected in times of great political excitement. It should be borne in mind that there were two kinds of Obstruction. The first was that kind of Obstruction in accordance with which a minority, when driven to bay, made use of every available Rule of the House in order to delay the passing of a very obnoxious measure. This kind of Obstruction had been resorted to by every Party and almost every eminent statesman, and surely no Member of the House would like to see it rendered impossible. Among others, Lord Palmerston was an advocate of this form of Obstruction, for on one occasion, writing to a friend, he pointed out that in certain cases Liberal Members might divide on every possible question; debate a clause, line by line; in his own words—

> "Might so obstruct the passing of a measure that a whole Session would not suffice to allow it to come into operation."

They had heard much in praise of the constitution of the Imperial Parliament as contrasted with the Legislatures of other countries; and he knew of no peculiarity by which the House was raised above all other Parliaments so honourable and distinguished as the power which was given to the smallest minority to interpose a barrier between the passing of an obnoxious measure and the will of an overbearing majority. It would probably be said that the kind of Obstruction which he (Mr. Justin M'Carthy) had described was not that which it was intended to abolish, which it would be said was Obstruction amounting to interference with the whole Business of the House. They had heard lately of a number of hon. Members of that House, whose set purpose was supposed to be to bring Parliamentary institutions into contempt. He might say that he had never chanced to meet that Party, nor, indeed, had he ever met a single individual who acknowledged that he desired to bring Parliamentary institutions into contempt. But he did not know by what means they could more effectually bring Parliamentary institutions into contempt than by furnishing a majority with the power of arbitrarily extinguishing the voice of a minority. The rights which minorities had hitherto enjoyed had ever been the admiration of foreign statesmen, who trusted that their Legislatures, taking example from our own, might some day adopt our practice in this respect. They had heard a great deal of the controversies that had led to these Resolutions. Well, he should like to ask whether in these disputes the fault had not as often been on the side of the Treasury Bench as on that of individual Members of the House? He remembered, on one occasion, the Chancellor of the Exchequer moving that an hon. Member's words be taken down on the ground that he had infringed the Rules of the House. But what had the hon. Member said? He had expressed a strong objection to a measure before the House, and declared that it would be his duty to thwart the Government in the passing of that measure. Surely, in doing that, the hon. Member was within his right. The Chancellor of the Exchequer on that occasion confounded the measures of the Government with the Business of the House. But reflection came before the morning, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer found that he was wrong, and that the hon. Member was strictly right. That had been the case in many instances, and one could understand that a minority thus continually irritated might sometimes have gone beyond the lines of conduct which they had laid down for themselves, and that too much heat on the one side might have engendered too much heat on the other. If history noticed the Parliamentary difficulties of the last few years, he thought they would be ascribed much more to the impatience, the mistakes, and the confusion of the Government than to any endeavour at obstruction on the part of the private Members. He did not believe, for his own part, that if any great measure had been before the House which roused the sympathy and feelings of the country, there would have been any obstruction calling for action on the part of the Government. There seemed at one time to be an intention on the part of the Government to trifle away the time of the House, especially when measures were concerned which deeply interested the heart and the conscience of a small but earnest minority of Irish Representatives. It must be allowed that it was somewhat hard to see legislation of great and vital importance to Ireland delayed day after day or denied altogether, when every now and then on some poor point of Order the Chancellor of the Exchequer was throwing his whole soul into an endeavour to bring the whole power of Parliament to bear on three or four Members whose conduct might be inconvenient to the majority. There was a political cause which threw a minority in the House into something like antagonism not only with the Government and the majority, but with public opinion out-of-doors; and that public opinion had been exercised in a manner which had a most injurious influence on the conduct of the Business of the House. When the question of Home Rule was first brought up, leading statesmen on both sides at once declared that it must never be conceded; while the Press of London, with some honourable exceptions, urged that not only must Home Rule not be granted, but that its advocates must not be allowed a hearing on the subject, and must be bluntly told that no arguments which might be brought forward in its favour could change the settled opinion of the House. English interests were to be the only thing considered, and statesmen were told in the current phrase that they must put their foot down and tell the miserable Irish Party that it should never have the concession it demanded. Had he been in the House at the time he should not have been much impressed by such language, knowing the value of what Mill called the eternal political *non possumus.* He was well aware that all reforms had, in the first instance, been invariably met by clamour of that kind. But it was not difficult to understand that some Irish Members took it seriously and supposed that it represented the set opinion of the Parliament and the people of England; and such Members, having a certain degree of bitterness thus engendered in their minds, might then have felt it to be their duty, not to obstruct general Business, but to use the Forms of the House in such a way as to convince the majority that their arguments must at least be heard. He doubted whether an English minority in anything like similar circumstances would not have been as resolute. But such collisions between majority and minority were exceptional and did not last long, and they gave no excuse for a sudden resolve to change the system of the House. He believed he was speaking as much in the interest of England as in that of Ireland when he urged the House to be careful how it passed such Resolutions as those now proposed. The changes of political Parties were often sudden, and the majority of yesterday became, it knew not how, the minority of to-day. It was easy enough to imagine a not distant future when a Conservative minority might have to struggle for something it held dear against an overwhelming and dominant Liberal majority, and on such an occasion the Members of the minority might think there had been too much haste shown in altering the ancient practice of Parliament. He deeply regretted that the Government had not seen their way to trust a little more to the growing good feeling and temper of Parties, and that they had suddenly, on a mere hint from the hon. Member for North Warwickshire, proposed these changes which, however striking and remarkable in themselves, might possibly have no effect whatever in curing the special evils which they were intended to abolish.

Mr. SYNAN remarked, that in the 15 years during which he had occupied a seat in that House he had never once violated its Rules nor insulted its traditions. Nevertheless, he rose to protest against the Resolution now under consideration, for that was all that remained for him to do, since his hon. Friend the Member for Longford (Mr. Justin M'Carthy) had not moved his Amendment. The noble Marquess the Leader of the Opposition, who had substantially supported the Resolution, while criticizing it, had shown to his (Mr. Synan's) mind a very great, perhaps a noble simplicity of character, in protesting to the House and to the country that he could not arrive at any explanation why the Resolutions were now brought forward after a lapse of two years. He (Mr. Synan) presumed that the noble Marquess's object was to elicit an explanation from the Treasury Bench; but the man must be very short-sighted indeed who could not find in what had lately happened an explanation as to the time and the object for which the Resolutions were introduced. What was the history of the case? In the Session of 1877 the Chancellor of the Exchequer passed a Resolution analogous in every respect to the first part of the Resolution before the House, and he omitted altogether the latter and more stringent part. The right hon. Gentleman then promised, on the part of the Government, to consider the matter during the Recess, and deal with it in the Session of 1878. But what did he do? He obtained a Select Committee, who adopted a Resolution analogous in terms to the first paragraph of the present Motion. But the right hon. Gentleman did not act upon it. In 1879 he placed a Resolution on the Table of the House, and did not act on it. Now why was that? He must suppose that the right hon. Gentleman did not consider that there was a necessity for it. Might he ask, then, what necessity had arisen since the commencement of the present Session? He knew that the Ministerial organs had published to the country that a necessity had arisen, and had denounced a small Party in the House as Irreconcilables, who endeavoured to prevent and obstruct the progress of Business; but he (Mr. Synan), defied any man in the House to show that any Irish Member had, during the present Session, violated any of the Rules of the House either in substance or spirit. Yet the Ministerial organs denounced them. Did they not know what that was for? Why, Liverpool was the first case in point. There a Liberal candidate took a harmless pledge which bound him more or less to the Obstructive Party. The noble Marquess (the Marquess of Hartington) wrote a letter in explanation, and rather in his support, and that letter was seized upon by his opponents for the purpose of connecting the Liberal Party and its Leaders with what was called the Obstructive Party, and of raising an election cry throughout the country. What occurred in the other House of Parliament? The Prime Minister of the country denounced this so-called Obstructive Party as a Party who were attempting to dismember the Empire, and who were disloyal to the Queen. Those words had been used for an electioneering purpose, and that was the purpose for which this Resolution had been brought forward. It was to show the English people, or rather the stupid English electors, that the Government was obliged at the eleventh hour to pass this Resolution, in order to uphold the dignity of the House of Commons, and to save the privileges of its Members from the assaults and obstruction of what their supporters called "a despicable lot of Irish Members." That was the secret; but the noble Marquess was too delicate to mention it. The Whigs were once dished, and the present proceeding of the Government, which emanated from the same head, was intended to dish the Liberals. He (Mr. Synan) was not very anxious to throw a shield over the Liberals, for they had been so frightened that they had all gone away. They were afraid to open their mouths, or even to be seen in the company of the Home Rulers. They were afraid that if they were found voting against this Resolution the people of England would identify them with the Irish Party, and that it would endanger their future election. In his opinion, honesty in politics, as in morals, was the best policy; and he would much prefer to see a high-minded Party who would raise its voice in defence of the Privileges and traditions of the House, and against a Resolution which was an innovation upon both, and which, in fact, was a Parliamentary revolution. The hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) had kept an almanack of the proceedings of the House so far as they related to the obstructive Irish Members. Had they been present during his speech they would consider it complimentary. They had more divisions, spoke oftener, and were more active than any other 20 or 30 or 100 Members. That was the argument of the hon. Member, and he (Mr. Synan) was satisfied that his obstructive Friends would use that argument in Ireland to show that they were the men who were entitled to the confidence of the Irish people. The hon. Member seemed to have forgotten that when his Party was in a minority its Members practised obstruction pretty extensively. Did he remember the Irish Church Disestablishment Bill, and, later still, the Army Bill? In regard to both these measures, gross obstruction was practised by a Conservative minority, and several of those who then led the obstruction had been rewarded with seats on the Treasury Bench. Why was not a Resolution brought forward then to put down the obstruction? Was it because the minority in the one case was English, and in the other it was Irish? Was that the distinction? Were they to adopt the words of Shakespeare, and say—

> "That in the captain is but a choleric word
> Which in the soldier is rank blasphemy."

He urged that the House, in virtue of its own common law, had the inherent power which the Resolution gave, and said he objected to it as a departure from the ancient ways of the Constitution, and a derogation from the privileges of Members. No one would refuse to sustain the judgment of the Speaker when called upon to give it; but if a hard-and-fast Resolution like that before them were put on the Records of the House against the express wishes, will, and judgment of several Members, it would meet with considerable and persistent opposition. With regard to the form of the Resolution, he objected to it most strongly, for while it embodied in some respects the terms proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1877, it omitted that portion which gave a *locus penitentiæ* to the accused Members. It was only fair that such Members should have at least 10 minutes allowed them for the purpose of explaining themselves, or of withdrawing the observations which were considered to constitute a Breach of Order. A case in point had occurred only the other day, when an hon. Member was accused of Breach of Privilege. Had the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved his Resolution before that occasion, the House would, doubtless, have deemed such a proceeding to be an insult of the Privileges of the House. But, instead of that summary mode of dealing with the hon. Member, a different course was adopted. Three days' grace, a *locus penitentiæ* was given to the hon. Member, who came down to the House, and, in his calmer moments, having considered what he had done, he gave a full explanation of the case, and withdrew the language which had given offence. The same opportunity should be given in the case now under consideration. If the Member was named by the Speaker, that Member ought to have time, in order that he might purge the offence, and the Business of the House should be allowed to go on in a calm way, instead of a course of action being adopted by the Government which would arouse the violent opposition of those hon. Gentlemen who sympathized with the accused Member. Another part of the proposal against which he indignantly protested was that which would give to the House or to the Speaker the power, not only to silence a Member or Members, but to prevent him from voting. If a Member misbehaved, let him be silenced if the House so willed it; but to deprive him of his vote was for the time being to disfranchise the constituency which returned him. Furthermore, he, for one, strongly condemned the 2nd Resolution of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. What right had the Government within two months of a Dissolution and on the very eve of a General Election to make the 1st Resolution a Standing Order? The Government knew that he (Mr. Synan) and his hon. Friends were not going to obstruct them. They were going to argue against the Government; but they meant to go to a division on every occasion on which they thought the Government were wrong, and that was almost always. If the hon. Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn) moved his Amendment, it was to be hoped that the hon. Member for Liskeard (Mr. Courtney) and other Members below the Gangway, and also hon. Members above it, would support that proposal, for he thought the general opinion of the House, on the Opposition side at any rate, was against making the 1st Resolution of the Chancellor of the Exchequer a Standing Order. Let their constituencies express their opinions at the General Election, and then, if the present Government got a majority, they might make the attempt to make this a Standing Order; but in the last Session of a Parliament he appealed to the House to protect its Privileges by resisting the proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for making this a Standing Order. He entertained a great respect for the historic traditions of the House; but he had a greater respect for its dignity and for the great stand it had made, especially against tyrant majorities, and therefore appealed to hon. Members to maintain that dignity by refusing to assent to the 2nd Resolution of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. SAMPSON LLOYD, in rising to move, as an Amendment—

> "That during a Debate, whether in the House or in Committee, any Member may draw the attention of the Chair to misconduct on the part of a Member who, in addressing the House, may persistently endeavour to prevent the Progress of Business, by rising in his place and taking Notice that the Member for —— is wilfully obstructing the Business of this House. Whereupon (unless in the judgment of the Chair the interruption is frivolous and unfounded, in which case he shall call on the Member in possession of the House to proceed), Mr. Speaker (or the Chairman) shall forthwith put the Question 'That —— be not further heard,' which

Question shall be decided without Amendment or debate; but the Motion shall not be carried by a majority of less than two-thirds if a Division is called. Any Member so put to silence shall stand suspended from the service of the House for one week. Any Member put to silence twice in the same Session shall stand suspended from the service of the House for one calendar month, and for such further period until he shall have submitted himself to the House, and given assurance that he will not so offend again,"

said, he objected to the claim which had been made for his Party by the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition, that they alone in the House were in favour of constructive legislation. There were on the Conservative side of the House a large number of Members in whom the desire for such legislation was just as strong, and who shared equally with Members of the Opposition the regret at the barren result of the last three years. Reference had been made on the other side to obstructive tactics which it was said had been at one time pursued by hon. Gentlemen who now sat on the Conservative Benches; but such references were by no means analogous to the instances of obstruction which the House had lately witnessed. Take, for example, the action of a small minority on the question of affairs in South Africa. Hon. Members, who had no more connection with South Africa than they had with the moon, had, nevertheless, protracted discussions on the subject to such an extent as to render it very difficult to pass the measure considered necessary by the Government. The evil of Obstruction was one which the House must deal with. The only question was as to the remedies; and, for himself, he believed it would be better to deal with the acts of hon. Members collectively than with the hon. Members themselves individually. There was one thing worse than obstruction, and that was any attempt on the part of the Government to deal with the difficulty which would fail in its effect. Holding that view, he regarded the Resolutions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as weak and futile, so far as checking the evil of which the majority of the House complained was concerned. With regard to the 2nd Resolution, he thought that there was great force in the suggestion of the noble Lord opposite, that it might have the effect of exposing the Speaker to the danger of differing from the House. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said of the Amendment he (Mr. Sampson Lloyd) was about to submit to the House that the proposal contained in it to protect Members against the tyranny of it might be a very small majority—namely, that a majority of two-thirds in a division should be required to carry penal consequences—was a thoroughly novel proposal. Well, the Resolutions were entirely novel too. The state of things they were meant to deal with was novel; and when, under the proposal of the Government, a majority of 1 might be the means of inflicting penal consequences, they had, he submitted, a right to provide some mode of protecting Members against the tyranny of a small majority. Again, the proposal of the Resolutions as to proceeding in Committee was cumbrous. The Chairman was to name a Member, then he was to report to the Speaker, who was to do as the Chairman had done. Why, instead of this round-about proceeding, should not the Chairman be invested with the same power as the Speaker was to have? Another proposal would lead to great delay—namely, that at the end of a Member's week's suspension there should be a Motion and debate. He could conceive no better mode of having time wasted than that. He did not think, therefore, that the Resolutions dealt effectively with the question. It was one which should be dealt with effectively. If it was not, he believed that public opinion out-of-doors would be so strong that much more stringent measures would have to be adopted. The Resolutions he considered to be weak, and for that reason he would move the Amendment of which he had given Notice.

MR. HANBURY said, it was in no hostile spirit that his hon. Friend (Mr. Sampson Lloyd) had moved the Amendment, and it was in no hostile spirit that he (Mr. Hanbury) rose to second it. There was a general feeling of gladness in the House that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had brought forward his Resolutions. He only regretted the general unanimity that appeared to prevail in favour of them, for he regarded with suspicion the great welcome which had been given to the Resolutions from below the Opposition Gangway, and he was afraid that the remedy suggested by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if applied, would be found to be inefficient. At the same time, there was a general feeling that if this important question was to be dealt with at all it ought to be dealt with in a strong and permanent manner. He feared that if those Resolutions were found to be weak they would have to be set aside in favour of stronger Resolutions, and nothing could be more dangerous than the re-opening of such a question. What they ought to do was to deal with the matter once and for all. It was impossible to deny that a great deal was gained under the Resolutions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the least thing gained was that the House would be able to deal with obstruction without any long debate. But at what price was that advantage gained? If they passed the Resolutions they sacrificed a great deal. The House had power now to deal with those offences by inflicting a much greater punishment than was provided by the Resolutions, so that they actually weakened the power of the House; and if he understood the meaning of the words "or otherwise" in the Resolutions the punishment provided by them would extend to even the most heinous offences. If a speaker endeavoured to pull the Speaker out of the Chair, he would have to repeat the offence a third time before he could be suspended even for a week. If it was intended that the Resolutions should not extend to all Parliamentary offences, the effect of the words "or otherwise" should be considered. Now, what were they about to do? They should remember that obstruction was the greatest possible offence of which a Member could be guilty. It fouled the well of liberty at its very source in that House, and yet it was to be visited with the mildest possible punishment. The Resolutions, were, in fact, a compromise. For punishment without debate the Government gave up the greater penalty which could now be inflicted. For the first offence a Member was to be suspended during the Sitting; but as obstruction was usually practised late at night that punishment would be little more than nominal. The offence might be repeated three times before there could be suspension for a week, and then a debate was to be held, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer evidently feared would last a whole night, for he provided that it should be closed in one Sitting. His hon. Friend's Amendment provided for an apology or submission on the part of the offending Member, and he could not but think that that would be the best guarantee against a repetition of the offence. Again, it provided for a majority of two-thirds, and that, no doubt, was a new system; but, in dealing with these offences, it was well to secure some remedy for a minority. The hon. Member for Limerick (Mr. Synan) said it was unfair to punish the constituents for the offence of the Member. He did not take that view, for it was assumed that the constituencies should send fit and proper persons to represent them in that House, and if they did not do so they ought to be punished. They were dealing with a great Parliamentary offence, and the remedy they applied should be a strong and a permanent one.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "during a Debate, whether in the House or in Committee, any Member may draw the attention of the Chair to misconduct on the part of a Member who in addressing the House may persistently endeavour to prevent the Progress of Business, by rising in his place and taking Notice that the Member for   is wilfully obstructing the Business of this House.

"Whereupon (unless in the judgment of the Chair the interruption is frivolous and unfounded, in which case he shall call on the Member in possession of the House to proceed), Mr. Speaker (or the Chairman) shall forthwith put the Question 'That   be not further heard,' which Question shall be decided without amendment or debate, but the Motion shall not be carried by a majority of less than two-thirds if a Division is called.

"Any Member so put to silence shall stand suspended from the service of the House for one week.

"Any Member put to silence twice in the same Session shall stand suspended from the service of the House for one calendar month, and for such further period until he shall have submitted himself to the House and given assurance that he will not so offend again,"—(*Mr. Sampson Lloyd*,)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the word 'whenever' stand part of the Question."

MR. SULLIVAN*: Mr. Speaker, there can be no disputing the elementary proposition that obstruction to the free exercise of its functions is an offence against which every Legislative Body has a right to defend itself; and in so far as the present proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer may be found to contain suggestions tending to facilitate Public Business without limiting fair freedom of debate, I, for one, hold myself free to give them my support. Apart even from the question of the lawfulness or propriety of obstruction, I have never believed in its efficacy. I talk of real obstruction. On the only occasion on which I saw conduct in this House which seemed to me to be fairly open to that designation, I expressed my dissent from it, not merely openly on this floor, but publicly in the Irish Press. But, as I have said, I speak of real obstruction—that is, obstruction to the action of this House, not incidental resistance to debatable proposals or proceedings in this House. The distinction is wide and clear, is grave and serious; and I appeal to the House not to confuse things so essentially different, and not to be impelled by clamour and passion out-of-doors into proceedings which, intended against obstruction, may have the effect and result of interfering with the rightful and legitimate resistance of a minority to Bills of which they honestly disapprove. What is obstruction? Can hon. Gentlemen opposite tell us? They will not avow what they really mean by this proceeding of to-night; but it has been avowed for them by their representative journals out-of-doors; this debate is all an electioneering move. ["No, no!"] No! Why, it has been avowed in *The Standard*, and the plot it seems was this—that if the Liberal Party could be manœuvred into opposing these Resolutions — as it was fondly hoped they might be—and if the Home Rulers at the same time could be provoked into dilatory resistance, Parliament was to be dissolved in a week or two, and Ministers were to go to the country on the cry of "Obstruction," hoping to come back with a thundering majority against an alleged iniquitous combination between Liberalism and Obstruction. But already this cunningly-devised scheme seems to have fallen through. Neither the Liberals nor the Home Rulers have been kind enough to walk into the trap. On the contrary, we are all of one mind as to the propriety of punishing or preventing obstruction; only some of us want to be told what it is you mean to put down under that name. Disguise it as you may, you mean by "obstruction" any resistance to a measure which you yourselves approve. It is the old story about orthodoxy. "Orthodoxy means my doxy, and heterodoxy means anybody else's doxy." I shall prove this. I shall prove that you are calling out "obstruction" against a mere difference of opinion with you—a legitimate difference of opinion—upon the merits of particular measures. Has there been any obstruction this Session? ["Yes, yes!"] Then I challenge any hon. Member who says "Yes," to take the records of our proceedings in his hand and point to a single division or other course of action to justify that assertion. There has been discussion on the Irish Relief Bill, and just because hon. Gentlemen opposite consider that whatever the Government proposes is right and perfect, they coolly conclude that such a Bill ought to run through in a canter; and we, who know better on such subjects, we whose country and whose money and whose people's lives are at stake in the matter, because we do not sink to the servile function of merely registering the decrees of the Cabinet, find our efforts to improve the Bill, and to examine and expose its shortcomings, set down as "obstruction" by Ministerial voters within this House, and Ministerial orators and writers outside of it. And just contemplate the justification and vindication of our conduct which is supplied in the improvements, the publicly-admitted improvements, we have thereby forced into the Bill. Yet although these have been our labours, these our motives, these our achievements, and although not a single instance of un-Parliamentary or unfair procedure can be laid to our charge this Session, there has not a day elapsed since the 3rd of February that we have not been howled at as "obstructing." Day by day Irish Members have been scandalously traduced; day by day the vilest language is used in the London Press to defame them, and to lash into fury against them the passions of the land, yet no Chancellor of the Exchequer rises in his place as Leader of the Commons to protect us by "Privilege," as he readily would do were we Members of his own Party. But "obstruction," forsooth; let us look into this matter a little. The Chancellor of the Exchequer told us it began "two or three years ago." We shall see as to that. The hon. Member for Plymouth (Mr. Sampson Lloyd) said in previous times there might have been some little symptoms of such a practice, but that it was only on one occasion, or in reference to some one particular Bill. Bless his innocent soul! He little knows the record of hon. Gentlemen sitting near him; he little knows what a tale the Journals of this House, now in my hands, can unfold. I shall let him know when obstruction—real, genuine, undisguised obstruction—began; and I will let him know who began it. And as I read out these details, let us now and again cast a glance at the Treasury Bench, and see if any of the facts we now behold there can be identified with the Obstructionists whose doings I am about to narrate. Of course, Mr. Speaker, we in this House know very well, though it may not be so clear out-of-doors, that the most familiar and undisguised form of obstructing any Business of the House is to set a-going a series of alternate Motions, "that this Debate be now adjourned," and "that the House do now adjourn." If we are sitting in Committee of the Whole House, the plan is to make the obstructive Motions alternate between "reporting Progress," and "that the Chairman leave the Chair." It was the use of these tactics—which, indeed, they used to any serious extent only on two occasions, and even then not without some Parliamentary justification—that first brought the hon. Members for Meath and Cavan (Mr. Parnell and Mr. Biggar) into notoriety as so-called "Obstructionists." Now, then, let me ask your attention to the volume in my hand. It is the official record of your Business and your Divisions in the Sessions of 1870 and 1871. In order to spare time, I take only these two years, and barely three or four scenes from the Obstructionist campaigns therein recorded. On the 17th of June, 1870, the Clerical Disabilities Bill was before this House. Fair debate, ordinary discussion, we do not mind; but after debate had been pursued, the play began, and up jumped Mr. Assheton Cross and moved "that this Debate be now adjourned." This was "opening the ball;" no less than 10 alternate Motions of obstruction following "hot foot" one after the other, far far into the night. Who composed the obstructive band? Just listen, and say, where and oh where are these Gentlemen now! "Viscount Sandon; next comes a right hon. Gentleman whose name begins with L, and who now officially adorns Dublin Castle; then come Mr. Assheton Cross, Mr. W. H. Smith, Sir William Hart Dyke, Mr. Rowland Winn, Mr. Cecil Raikes, Hon. G. J. Noel, Sir Matthew White Ridley, Colonel C. Lindsay, Mr. J. G. Talbot." Well, they were voted down by an overwhelming majority; but, all undaunted, they went at the work before them. Barely had the Speaker announced the numbers, when Mr. Guest moved "this House do now adjourn." Round through the Lobbies they go once more, and again before one could draw his breath, the next Motion by Mr. Pell, "that this Debate be now adjourned," carried on the game. But, Sir, who moved the next? Hearken to the name; it is one to be found unfailingly in every one of the worst of these Obstructionist proceedings — "Mr. Cecil Raikes," our Chairman of Committees at the present day, the identical Gentleman whom the Chancellor of the Exchequer to-night proposes to endow with judicial powers for the repression of Obstructionists! Well, Mr. Raikes's Motion was voted down too, and here is how the fight was waged. Mr. Hodgson moves the House adjourn; Mr. Heygate "Debate," Mr. Starkie "House," Mr. Rowland Winn "Debate," Colonel C. Lindsay "House." By this time, Sir, it was broad daylight; the birds were chirping on the trees; and accordingly Mr. Finch—appropriate name—moves the debate be now adjourned. This, too, being defeated, the heroic few took a final division on the clause originally before the House—Mr. Raikes, faithful to the last, being Teller for the Obstructionists—and then they went home. I have given the House the names of those Gentlemen; and again I ask, where are they now? Sandon, Raikes, Winn, Cross, Dyke, Smith, Lowther, Noel, Lindsay — ah, where indeed, but on the Treasury Bench! In truth, Mr. Speaker, as I shall show before I sit down, it is the men who qualified by the most signal service in the work of obstruction who have been rewarded with Office in the present Government. The hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) should note the fact, there may be a brilliant future before him, if he but persevere in following the example thus held out to him. Let me own, however, that there is one name I miss from most of these Obstructionist Divisions. I look in the alphabetical list, letter N, and find it so very seldom there that it is a marvel to me how they ever made the owner of it Chancellor of the Exchequer, he did so little in the way of obstruction to win his spurs. He did something, however. What I have read to the House was pretty fair for one night; but it was, by comparison, only a little innocent skirmish, a sort of preliminary canter. On the 14th of July following—there were minor displays in the interval—the Education Bill was before the House. There had been in the evening four debates and four heavy divisions, and then commenced a scene or series of scenes throughout an all-night Sitting. The man put up to move the first of the obstructive Motions was—whom would the House suppose?—Sir James D. Elphinstone! A greater problem than the discovery of the North-West Passage, or the Livingstone task in Mid-Africa, is solved to-night! Any man might have vainly offered a prize of £1,000 for a successful guess at why that estimable Gentleman was put on the Treasury Bench; but now we know it—he was an Obstructionist. He was followed into the division by every Member of the present Government who then had a seat in this House, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer included, and one whose name we assuredly have heard before—here it is—"Mr. Benjamin Disraeli." Let the hon. Member for Ennis (Mr. Finigan) take courage. He may be Prime Minister yet. The next was by way of a Motion against the ballot in Board elections, moved by—how shall I tell the story?—Lord John Manners! Now, Mr. Speaker, if there is one man on the Treasury Bench whom it would grieve us to find practising as an Obstructionist, that one is the amiable noble Lord the Postmaster General. Only fancy the poet Peer, who pleaded for "our old nobility," acting as precursor and preceptor to Messrs. Biggar and Parnell. I will briefly recite from the volume in my hand the record of that memorable night's obstruction, and the names of the Movers of Motions. Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson—we had not him before; but, as he is now in the Treasury, he was sure to have been in the work then—moved that the secret ballot be open to all ratepayers; a playful proposition which admirably varied the night's performance. Then came all these alternate Motions—"Progress," Mr. Guest; "Chair," Mr. Vance; "Progress," Mr. Lowther; "Chair," Mr. Seymour; "Progress," Mr. Cartwright; "Chair," Mr. Cubitt; "Progress," Sir Percy Burrell; and so on, trotting round the Division Lobbies till a quarter past 5 o'clock in the morning! I cast my eye over the list of those who, resisting this protracted attempt, sat out the night; and I find these—"Gladstone, Brand, Forster, Hartington, Mundella, Lawson, Playfair"—in all, 245 against 21. Amongst those anti-Obstructionists, who stood the battle to the very end, we notice one man, who perhaps little thought that night that the suffrages of this House would elevate him to the well-won and worthily occupied eminence of President of this Assembly, and "First Commoner of England," Of this, at all events, we may be sure—that as he paced the Lobbies all that dreary night, and marked the dauntless persistence of the dividers, he little could have believed that he would live to listen to the reckless and implacable Obstructionists of those times moving penal Resolutions, and making mock-virtuous denunciations against obstruction and Obstructionists. Why did not the cry arise at that time for repressive Resolutions? Why did not England resound with objurgations of obstruction? Why was no one concerned for "the progress of Public Business," "the dignity of our Parliamentary institutions," and all the rest of it? Why did the majority of that day take no steps to stop such conduct? I will tell you—because it was felt that, as between Liberal and Tory, the minority of to-day may be the majority of to-morrow, and the power to take reprisals was kept in mind. But no such fear curbs you in striking at us Irish Members. ["Oh, oh!"] Yes, you dare not do this against an English Liberal minority that may possibly be a majority to pay you back next year; but we Irishmen can never be a majority of this Assembly; we are weak; it is safe to strike at us, and so you strike to-night. Well, Sir, the instances of obstruction I have quoted were from only one Session. It might be thought that when hon. and right hon. Obstructionists went off to shoot the birds on the 12th of

August, and when they had had five or six months to reflect over matters a little, they would come back to a new Session the next year in a better frame of mind. Not a bit of it. Obstruction was still their watchword, and they valiantly stood to their guns. Take the second month of the next Session, that of 1871; the eve of St. Patrick's day, auspicious occasion!—the Army Purchase Bill. After plenty of debate, the midnight hour brought the time for the accustomed practice, and forthwith it began. Division No. 20, Colonel North, "adjourn Debate;" No. 21, Mr. Fowler, "House;" No. 22, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach—Colonial Office in view—"Debate;" No. 23, Sir John D. Hay, "House;" No. 24—whom have we here? memories of Chevy Chase!—"Earl Percy of Northumberland," "Debate;" No. 25, Lord Garlies, "House." In the very last of these divisions I find these names amongst the handful of Obstructionists: Beach, Cross, Bourke, Cavendish Bentinck—ah, now, there ought to be an apology to that right hon. and learned Gentleman from the hon. Baronet the Member for Carlisle (Sir Wilfrid Lawson), who once said it was for his ornamental qualities our Prime Minister made him Judge Advocate General. No, it was for his obstructive capacities. Then come Dyke, Elcho, Lord George Hamilton (winning his way, you see, to the India Office), Noel, Lindsay, Lowther—of course, Lowther — Wheelhouse, Mowbray (not yet placed), and Raikes—the eternal Raikes—he is in every division of them; not a scene of obstruction would be complete without him. Ireland was there too, represented by my eloquent Friend the hon. and learned Tory Member for Dublin University (Mr. Plunket). Let us speed on to a few weeks later. The flowers of May brought no compunction to the untiring band. Here they are at it again as fresh as ever; same Bill, Sir, 8th of May, 1871. This, I believe, was the night which is known in history as "the Colonels' night." The debate had proceeded with one legitimate division up to midnight, and then the old familiar performance was turned on—Division No. 63, Colonel Arbuthnot, "That this Debate be now adjourned;" No. 64, Colonel Jervis, "I move the House do now adjourn;" No. 65, Colonel Knox, "Debate;" No. 66, Colonel Corbet, "House;" No. 67, Sir William Bagge, "Debate." On this occasion, for some reason or another, the lead, as far as moving the obstructive Motions, was left in the hands of "the Colonels;" but let no one suppose the embryo Cabinet Ministers held back from their accustomed game. No, no; here they are on the record before me—Sandon, Manners, Pakington, Hart Dyke, Cecil, Ridley, Elcho, Raikes, Hay, Lopes, (two of them, Sir), Noel, Hamilton—five Hamiltons, no less—the faithful Lowther, and the venerable Taylor. Now, Sir, it would occupy too much of our time, and imitate too closely the tactics I am referring to, were I to linger on these reminiscences of virtuous Conservatism in Opposition, so I shall quote no more. But let it be clearly understood I have merely taken three or four scenes out of a five years' campaign that began with 1869, and, up to 1874, doggedly fought every effort of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich to effect reform for Ireland, for England, or for Scotland. It was not opposition to one particular measure. It was not a momentary burst of temper on a solitary evening. No. It went, as I have shown, from month to month and from year to year. A factious though futile endeavour by waste of time to delay what they could not hinder, a vain attempt to retard the inevitable march of liberty and reform. ["Oh, oh!"] Yes; I charge it as the worst feature in the worst scenes of this obstruction, that it was put into operation confessedly in the narrow interests of a class, a caste, or a clique, as opposed to the wide interests of the nation. The next consideration to which I invite attention is this—that the men who, then a mere fraction of the representation of their own country, thus set themselves to the purposes of dead-lock and chaos in this House, were no obscure and undisciplined conscripts, but the foremost men, the official Leaders and Chiefs, of the Conservative Party. Mark the names. They are the Cabinet Ministers of to-day. With these facts before me, with these records in my hand, how am I to regard the conduct of Her Majesty's Government in this House and out of it during the past five or six weeks? How can I abstain from characterizing as ineffable hyprocrisy their now noisy clamour and affected horror of obstruction! Did ever men in the high position of Ministers of the Crown descend to so ignoble a resort of Party warfare as the electioneering artifice of which this debate is but a part, and which had its commencement in a recent Lancashire election? ["No, no!"] I say yes, yes. A noble Lord who sits yonder on the Treasury Bench this moment—himself, as you have heard, a well-trained and habituated Obstructionist—has barely returned from Liverpool, where, Cabinet Minister as he is, he spent days and nights inveighing against Liberal sympathies with Ireland as unpatriotic collusion with Obstruction. Of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, in those days as in these, seems to have been too moderate for his Party, I speak as I feel with sincere respect; but I have nought but scorn and loathing for those miserable creatures of faction, who in the Press and on the platform are just now striving to lash up a fury of passion and prejudice against my country, its cause, and its people; who, in their eagerness to crush political rivals, do not hesitate to denounce as false to Crown and country the man who reaches out a friendly hand to a people much wronged and long oppressed. I am not entitled to offer counsel to those who lead the Liberal Party. I am not in their ranks; the co-operation and support they receive from men like me is independently given, and given cheerfully and heartily, from allegiance to principle, not allegiance to Party. But if I might offer them a word of advice, it would be to evade the political snare that is set for them in all this business, and baffle the adroit scheme which was to find a good cry for the General Election in Liberal opposition and Home Rule Obstruction to these Resolutions. As for my own countrymen, my Colleagues and Friends who sit around me, I adjure them to be wary and wise on this occasion; to be circumspect, temperate, and prudent; lest they afford a pretext to those whose aim is to put enmity and misunderstanding between them and the English people. ["Oh! oh!"] Yes, Sir; it is just because kindly sympathies and generous feelings for Ireland are daily making way amongst the people of England—just because the desire to investigate and to understand our case, and the determination to do us justice, are being avowed by broad-minded and justice-loving Englishmen in steadily increasing numbers—that alarm has seized upon a certain class of politicians who feel the hour of judgment is at hand for them. This is the secret of the anti-Irish crusade out-of-doors. This is the design of the present debate. Let us by prudence and good feeling baffle it here to-night. Let us trust with confidence to the intelligence of the country. It will know what answer to make when asked to endow those Gentlemen with a new lease of power, so that, forsooth, the Obstructionists of 1870 may put down the Obstructionists of 1879.

MR. CHAPLIN, who had given Notice, as an Amendment to Mr. Newdegate's Motion, to move the following Resolutions:—

"(1.) A Motion may be made, 'That any Member then speaking be no longer heard,' but no speech shall be made in support of or against such Motion; (2) the Speaker or the Chairman of the Committee may put such Question if he think fit, and the Division shall thereon be taken without Amendment or Debate, but it shall not be affirmed if there are forty Members opposed to it; (3) if the Motion be affirmed, the Member speaking is silenced and suspended from taking further part in the proceedings of the House, and such suspension shall continue until the House has further considered it; (4) such a Motion shall not be made more than once during any speech of a Member; (5) a Motion for relieving the Member from suspension, or for declaring any other judgments of the House, may be proposed before the commencement of Public Business at the next sitting of the House. These Resolutions to be added to the Standing Orders of the House,"

said, as the hon. and learned Member for Louth (Mr. Sullivan) had not included him among those who, by obstruction, had taken what he said was the only sure road to a seat on the Treasury Bench, it was the less necessary that he should follow him through the long list he had quoted. He should have thought that the test of obstruction was not to be found in the number of divisions taken by the alleged Obstructionists, but in the purpose and object for which obstruction was practised. However that might be, in his opinion the time had now arrived when it was necessary, in the public interest, that some alteration should be made in the Rules and Regulations by which they had hitherto conducted Public Business. If he were to express an opinion on the subject, he would echo the sentiments of the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition, that they had already delayed a great deal too long. He had heard with pleasure the speech of his noble Friend so far as it intimated that he would give his support to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his efforts to deal with Obstruction. But he understood his noble Friend to complain, or, at all events, express surprise, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not explained in detail the character of the obstruction against which his proposals were directed. Surely the noble Lord, his Friends on the Benches opposite, and every hon. Member of that House, must know what the character of that obstruction was. If the noble Lord did not, then he was the only Member of the House wanting in that information, and it would lead him (Mr. Chaplin) to think that the noble Lord was passing a good deal of his time asleep on that Bench, and in happy unconsciousness of all that was going on around him. There might be something more, however, in the regret which the noble Lord expressed that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not taken him into his confidence before proposing his Resolutions. Speaking as an independent Member of that House, who had watched all that had been going on, he was not aware of that evident desire and determination on the part of the noble Lord and his Friends to assist the Leader of the House which would have encouraged him to make any advances. It was possible, of course, that the noble Lord and his Friends were burning with desire to support measures for suppressing Obstruction; but, if that were so, they were singularly successful in concealing their ardent wishes. It was certainly not the desire of all the noble Lord's Friends; for, on one occasion not long ago, during the occurrence of one of those scenes too familiar to the House, a most distinguished Member of the late Administration, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright), counselled a little patience to hon. Members on both sides at a moment when they were smarting severely under the infliction. Why, the patience of Job must almost have been exhausted; and he (Mr. Chaplin took the liberty of expressing at the time an opinion, which he still held, that, so far from the House being wanting in patience, its forbearance under such provocation, if it did not command the admiration, had long been the wonder and amazement of the world. For his own part, he rejoiced sincerely that there was at last some evidence of the determination of the House to deal earnestly with the matter, for he was convinced that their forbearance would be mistaken for weakness and incapacity. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had pointed out that evening that in every Assembly like the House of Commons some rules were absolutely necessary for the discharge of its Business, and the Rules of that Assembly had up to a recent period been found perfectly adequate to the purpose. Unhappily, no one could say that that was the case at the present moment. But why was it that Rules which were insufficient to-day had been found perfectly adequate up to a recent date? It was not because obstruction was formerly more difficult. On the contrary, there were always the same facilities for obstruction. It never required any commanding intellect, or any original mind, to read extracts from a Blue Book or Act of Parliament by the hour, or to place a block of Amendments on the Order Book. It was no new discovery that two, three, or five Members, if they pleased, could not bring the whole Business of the House to a stand. All that was wanted was a total absence of self-respect, and a stolid indifference to Public Business. These two qualities given, and were there any Members at any time so insignificant, or so generally incapable, that they could not, with the greatest ease, if they chose, bring the whole Business of the House and the country to a standstill? But if the Rules of the House were adequate in past days it was only because they applied to men who always were most anxious to observe, not only the letter, but the spirit, of the Rules—men of whom Lord Palmerston once said in the House—"At all events, we are all gentlemen here." He was not sure how far Lord Palmerston would feel justified in repeating those words, if he were still among them. But this, at least, he did know—that the Rules, if kept to the letter, had been over and over again broken in spirit, and that they were now wholly inadequate. The consequence was that they had seen, day after day, week after week, and year after year, proceedings which could have no other effect than to bring that House into discredit and disrepute out-of-doors. If that were so—and, unhappily, it could not be denied—it was a state of things which they could not allow to continue, if that House wished to retain the position which hitherto it occupied in the estimation of the country. When they saw that the unanimous sentiment and feeling of the House had been so constantly and persistently outraged, he felt that sooner or later they must have some new machinery by which the House itself, on these deplorable occasions, would be able instantly to compel obedience to the dictates of good feeling and good taste. How was that to be done? Whatever step they should ultimately decide on, one thing at least was certain—it must be effectual and it must be prompt in its operation. *Frappez vite et frappez fort* must be their motto and the principle on which they must act. He would, however, do nothing to curtail the legitimate rights of a minority, prevent freedom of speech, or give uncontrolled power to a mere Party majority. There was Obstruction and Obstruction, and that was the answer to the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Louth. There was Obstruction which might be used for an ulterior purpose, such a purpose as was avowed by one of the most able and eloquent of all the eloquent Members who hailed from the other side of the Irish Channel. He would give the House the hon. Member's own words. They were these—

> "I am here as a Member of a Party that has been sent into this House to carry a great object."

That was the Party, he presumed, of which the noble Lord and his Friends were so eager to gain the support and adhesion on a celebrated occasion not long ago. The hon. Member went on thus—

> "I may say it is nothing less than to win the legislative independence of a nation. And if the Irish Members are in earnest in carrying forward that great mission, there are no pains or penalties which can be inflicted which they will not be prepared to encounter rather than allow themselves to be fettered in the discharge of their public duty."

That, at all events, was an honest and frank avowal, and as such he could feel some sympathy with it. At the same time, he was bound to express the opinion that if ever they found themselves to be confronted with Obstruction like that, then there was only one course for that House to pursue, and that was to crush it, and to crush it without a moment's hesitation. But there was another kind of Obstruction, to which the hon. and learned Member for Louth alluded—an obstruction made to legislation which the minority really believed to be mischievous not only to those whom they represented, but to the whole country, and against that kind of obstruction he had not one word to say. But they must remember, in attempting to provide a weapon for instantly checking obstruction, they must be most careful to provide effectual safeguards against passion and the oppression of the minority. That made it all the more difficult to deal with obstruction in a manner at once satisfactory and effectual. He thought, however, that the task might be accomplished in one of two ways—they might leave the initiative to the Speaker, and throw all the responsibility upon him; or they might give it to the House. In the one case, no further safeguard was required; in the other, it would be necessary to provide safeguards, and there were great but not insuperable obstacles to be overcome if they attempted to provide them. For his own part, he should prefer to see the initiative vested in the House itself. He would not enter into details; but would content himself by saying that if it appeared to be the general opinion of the House—and he presumed from what had passed that evening that it would be so—that the initiative should rest with the Speaker, then he would give his hearty support to the proposal of his right hon. Friend. He trusted sincerely that there would be no long delay before the Resolution was added to the Standing Orders of the House. Every day during which they allowed Obstruction to continue lessened their position and influence in the country. It was impossible to over-estimate the importance of maintaining their position; for if ever a day were to come when the House of Commons should fall into anything like permanent discredit or disrepute in the opinion of the nation, it would not be only their own reputations and characters that would suffer, but the very existence of representative government, the Constitution of the country, and the liberties of the people would be at stake.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT said, that the hon. Member who had just sat down (Mr. Chaplin) had observed that he was not one of those who had qualified for the Treasury Bench as an author of obstruction. [Mr. Chaplin: I said the hon. and learned Member for Louth had not included me in the list.] He believed that the hon. and learned Member for Louth had not included the hon. Member in his remark, because he had not been in a position so to have qualified, as he had never had the advantage of sitting in Opposition. If the hon. Member had been in the House in 1870——[Mr. Chaplin explained that he was in the House before the Conservative Government came into power.] In that case, he was entirely mistaken. [*Ministerial cheers.*] Hon. Members opposite who cheered seemed to think it was something extraordinary for a Gentleman to acknowledge a mistake, as if they themselves were never in the habit of doing so. However, the hon. Member had had an opportunity of qualifying, but had not availed himself of it. At any rate, he had inserted into his speech a very judicious saving clause, which would enable him on a future occasion to conduct his opposition as he thought proper. Now, he (Sir William Harcourt) did not all object to what the hon. Member had said, except with regard to one or two points on which he had rather misunderstood the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition. The hon. Member had said that his noble Friend had objected that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not stated to the House the exact character of the obstruction that had been carried on. That, however, was not the tenor of the remarks of the noble Lord, who had not said that he was not aware of obstruction, but that he thought it desirable, when the House was taking unusual measures, that some statement of the character of the obstruction in question should go forth to the public as an explanation of the course adopted. The hon. Member had likewise remarked that he had not observed that the noble Lord supported measures to put down obstruction; but his noble Friend had, in fact, been a Member of the Select Committee, and had supported by his vote all the propositions upon which the present proposal of the Government was founded. If he might refer to the matter, he recollected that on the memorable night through which the House sat till the evening of the next day, he had more than once invited the Chancellor of the Exchequer to take more vigorous measures for resisting obstruction, so that it was unfair and ungenerous to say that there was any indisposition on that side of the House to support the Government in any measures necessary for the conduct of Business. He did not wish, however, to enter into any controversial topics, but preferred, if he might be allowed, to do so in plain English, rather than in the questionable French of the hon. Member for Mid-Lincolnshire, to offer a few suggestions. He agreed with his noble Friend that their attitude towards the Resolutions of the Government should be one of the most friendly criticism, and that it was their duty not to embarrass, but to support the Government in the course they might adopt. He would, therefore, endeavour to urge on their attention the argument addressed to them earlier in the evening by his noble Friend on the subject of taking the vote of the House to confirm the decision of the Speaker. He would call the attention of the House to the fact that when the matter was discussed in the Select Committee the Speaker had very strongly expressed his own view that the decision had better be the decision of the Speaker, and of the Speaker alone. On page 141 of the Report on Public Business, the Speaker had said—

> "Speaking for myself personally, I should be glad that the vote of the House should be taken, because thereby the responsibility of the Speaker would be in some measure lightened; but I am so confident that the Speaker or Chairman would not put any Resolution of the kind without the full support of the House that I do not think such a vote necessary."

Was the vote of the House to be an appeal against the Speaker, or was it to be a confirmation of the decision of the Speaker? He ventured to think it would answer neither of these purposes. As far as an appeal against the Speaker was concerned, how could it operate? It was an appeal from a man who had seen the whole transaction, who had formed an impartial opinion upon it, who had given judgment upon it, to a body of men a great portion of whom had not witnessed the transaction, who knew nothing about it. He did not understand that the person who made the Motion was to give an account of the views of the Speaker. He supposed the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be the man who would ordinarily make a Motion in support of the Speaker. Well, even Chancellors of the Exchequer had frailties of human nature, and they sometimes went to dinner. Suppose the Chancellor of the Exchequer was absent for a short time? These transactions might have been going on during his absence. Many of the persons appealed to might not have been present while these transactions were going on; they would hear no debate, and they would give a vote which was to be an appeal against the Speaker. That appeared to him to be unreasonable. Well, was the vote to be a vote in confirmation of the Speaker? If they were to confirm the Speaker, what would be the value of a vote given by persons who were not present when the transactions were going on? It seemed to him, whether they regarded the matter as an appeal against the Speaker or in confirmation of the Speaker, in either case it did not answer the purpose. Well, if that was so, the thing was a farce. For his part, he thought they might safely trust to the judgment of a man in the impartial situation of the Speaker, who was the only man who could have a full knowledge of everything that occurred, and who would give his decision in the light of public responsibility. To call upon the House to vote would be to place everybody in a false position. It would place the Speaker in a false position, because it would subject his ruling to an appeal to Members of the House. It would place the House in a false position, because it would call upon the House to decide upon things on which it had not full and adequate knowledge. It would place the country in a false position, because it would make the country suppose that judgment was given by the House on a matter as to which it had material for giving judgment. Beyond that, he feared it would give a sort of flavour of injustice to the thing, if the House was allowed to give a vote by a majority summoned on the instant on a matter which everybody might feel they had not had an opportunity of examining. He thought that everybody—the country at large—would be much more satisfied with the judgment of the Speaker upon the question than they could be with a vote of the House. He thought they would have far higher security if they left the matter to the judgment of the Speaker, and if suspension followed from a Standing Order as a consequence of the Speaker naming a Member of the House. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that that would be contrary to all precedent. So it would be, to a great degree; but they were trying to find an extraordinary remedy for an extraordinary evil. Therefore, if they departed, to a certain degree, from former precedent, he did not think they would be going very far wrong. But he did not think that in point of principle they would be departing from former precedent, because if they made it a Standing Order that the consequence of the Speaker's naming a Member should be his suspension for the night, his suspension would not be the sentence of the Speaker, but of the Standing Order. Another point with which he agreed with the hon. Member for Plymouth (Mr. Sampson Lloyd) was that the machinery for calling on the Chairman of Committees was very cumbrous. The hon. and learned Member for Louth (Mr. Sullivan) had referred in a good-humoured way to the present Chairman of Committees. The hon. and learned Member was perfectly entitled to make the good-humoured remarks which had fallen from him; but he (Sir William Harcourt) was sure he was expressing the opinion of the great body of the House when he said how admirably and with what great ability and impartiality that hon. Gentleman discharged the duties of his Office. It seemed to him that it would be invidious to make a distinction in the machinery of the Rule between the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees, when the latter was occupying the Chair in the absence of the Speaker. With reference to that part of the Resolution which provided that if a Member be suspended three times in one Sitting his suspension on the third occasion should continue for a week, it was a mere trifling with the thing, and he thought it extraordinarily week. That a man should be suspended on the first occasion was a measure which could not be carried into effect without several warnings, and it was thought that in such a way as that the gravity of his offence would be ascertained. He did not think it wise that the first repetition of the offence should be allowed. He was not quite certain whether the law continued to be what it used to be; but the old doctrine of the Common Law of England was that a dog should be allowed one bite, and should not be punished unless it was known that he was dangerous to the human race. But the Scotch law punished the dog for his first bite, and held that a man ought to know the character of his dog. But he had never heard of any law which allowed a man to have two bites for his dog. But that seemed the principle on which the Resolution of the Government was framed. The aggravated penalty ought to come into force at once, for it was perfectly clear that the next time a man offended it should be considered a grave fault upon which a penalty should be inflicted. All he could say was, speaking for himself alone, that there ought to be no hostility between one and another on the question. Every man ought to be allowed to throw in his contribution. The Resolutions would place the Speaker in a position of great responsibility, and he should have been better pleased if the Government had brought forward a Resolution that if the Speaker, exercising his judgment with great caution and under a sense of heavy responsibility, named a Member of the House, then by the operation of the Standing Order, without any vote at all, the Member would stand suspended for the Sitting; and if the Speaker, of course still warning the man more gravely a second time, named him a second time, then by the force of the Standing Order, at once the aggravated penalty should apply. Indeed, he should not have the slightest hesitation in voting the Member be suspended for the whole Session. At all events, the penalty should be put into the Standing Order. He did not care to make two bites at a cherry. But he did not like the action of the House to be carried out by a vote *ad hoc;* it was always an excited vote, and nothing like a feeling against any individual should be allowed to be mixed up with the decision. The action of the House was best brought into operation by the Standing Order, and the decision must be ultimately left to the Speaker. He agreed with his noble Friend that there was no wish to embarrass the Government. He merely offered these suggestions for the consideration of the Government, who might consider whether they were worthy of acceptance or not. If they could improve the Resolution, well and good; if not, he would not force Amendments on the Government which they might resist, and which they might think fatal to the Resolution.

Lord JOHN MANNERS said, it would not be necessary for him to do more than reply to a few of the criticisms which had been urged early in the debate. He was glad to find in the opening sentences of the noble Lord (the Marquess of Hartington) a general and cordial support of the Resolution of the Government. It was not necessary for the hon. and learned Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt) to make any excuse for the remarks he had offered. There had evidently been a desire on the part of almost every hon. Member who had spoken that some result should be arrived at by which greater security for the dignity of the debates of the House should be obtained, which had been, unfortunately, so much impaired during the last three or four years. He came now to the main objection to the Resolutions taken by the noble Lord and the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite, who were both of opinion that the decision of the Speaker should be final, and that the sentence of the House should not be called in to ratify or to rebut that decision. It seemed to him (Lord John Manners) that an entire misconception prevailed upon this point. There was no intention whatever on the part of the Government, by the subsequent action of the House, either to ratify or to repudiate the action of the Speaker. His action would be distinct, separate, and conclusive in itself. The Speaker would inflict upon the offending Member what, in old days, and, indeed, up to the present time, had always been considered a very severe punishment indeed—he would name the Member, and having so named him his part of the transaction would be complete, and it would then rest with the House to say whether, following upon that punishment, it would of its own Motion inflict a further punishment, and suspend the offending Member for the whole of the Sitting. This course would impart still greater solemnity to the censure of the Speaker upon the conduct of the Member, and would in no way derogate from the dignity of the Chair. It appeared to the

Government that, in such cases as they contemplated, it would be expedient and advisable to vindicate, without hesitation, the order and dignity of the House; and by the plan proposed, first of all enabling the Speaker summarily to name the Member, and, secondly, giving the House the opportunity of inflicting the further punishment of suspension during the whole of the current Sitting, every element of authority would be brought to bear on the side of order. The noble Lord, and some hon. Gentlemen on his own side of the House, objected to the proposal that after the Chairman of Committees and the Committee itself should have decided that the offence had been committed, the Chairman should be ordered to report the matter to the House, and that the second decision should be taken by the House. The reason for that was obvious. It had been thought wise by the Government to propose that the punishment should consist, not merely of putting the Member to silence, but of suspending him during the whole of the Sitting, whether the House was in Committee or not, and it was obvious that in many cases the offences would be committed early in the evening when the House was in Committee. The punishment, however, was to last during the whole of the Sitting; and, therefore, the Government had thought it only right that the House should be asked to co-operate with the Committee in silencing the Member for the whole of the night. This part of the Resolution the hon. and learned Gentleman and the noble Lord considered lamentably weak. But they had heard from other speakers that the proposal was too harsh. It was extremely difficult to satisfy even a large proportion of hon. Members; and the Government believed that the comparatively mild punishment proposed in the second part of the Resolution was more likely to be operative than if some very severe sentence, such as had been indicated by the hon. and learned Member for Oxford, were to be incorporated in the Resolution. The hon. and learned Member went so far as to propose that, without referring the matter to the House, suspension for the remainder of the Session should be the result of a second offence on the part of a Member. His (Lord John Manners') own feeling was that so very heavy a penalty would have a great tendency to defeat itself. It would very seldom, if ever, be put into operation; and they would have upon their Journals a Resolution which, while appearing to be of a severely repressive character, would be very inoperative in action. The Government had, therefore, thought it wiser to propose so moderate a Resolution that even the Gentlemen who might have been expected violently to oppose it had manifested during the debate no intention of taking any extreme steps. At the same time, if the House should be of opinion that three times were too many to allow for the same offence, and that two offences on the part of a Member should constitute sufficient indication of an obstructive intention, and be followed up by punishment, he did not know that the Government would oppose the alteration suggested. The noble Lord had hinted that some more stringent provision might hereafter be found necessary. There was the suggestion of a Committee of Order, to which offending Members might be relegated; but it occurred to him (Lord John Manners) that the objection of the noble Lord to the Resolution proposed by the Government—namely, that it would have a tendency to put on one side the authority of the Chair—applied with far greater force to the suggestion of a Committee of Order, because virtually, so far as these offences were concerned, the Committee of Order, if he rightly understood the noble Lord, would mean the Speaker in Commission. He thought he might even go further, and say that it would be not only the Speaker, but the Speaker and the House put into Commission on a question of Order. That, he thought, was sufficient to condemn the suggestion. The noble Lord had also thrown out the suggestion that the only effective way of dealing with Obstruction would be to resort to the foreign system of what was known as the *clôture*. That was, however, a very serious suggestion, and one which would, he feared, be found to militate very much against the rights of minorities. He would further beg leave to observe that the temper of the House in relation to the question before it seemed to be only a mild reflex of the temper of the country, and that the observations of every speaker who had taken part in the discussion who had expressed the opinion that the Resolutions of the Government erred on the side of leniency had been received with applause, and that was a consideration which he hoped would have weight with those whom it most concerned. In his opinion, however, it was the duty of the Government, in proposing Resolutions on such a subject, not to go to the full extent of the feeling of the House at the moment, but rather to propose a remedy which they believed would result in vindicating successfully the dignity of the House, and in maintaining its legitimate influence and power, but which, at the same time, did not go one inch beyond the absolute necessity of the case. A question of the sort, no doubt, must present itself naturally to different minds under different aspects; but he would entreat the House not to allow itself to be carried away to too great a stringency in endeavouring to deal with this mischief, but to try the proposal which was made in this Resolution. Contrary to the opinion which had been expressed by several Members in this debate, the Government felt that, although the House might not have many more weeks or months to exist, it was still the duty of this Parliament to make a Standing Order of this Resolution. It was this Parliament which had experienced the evil; it was this Parliament which had carefully studied the means of meeting it. It was their duty to make an effort to maintain its dignity in the conduct of its Business, and in what they had now done they had taken the steps which they deemed to be best calculated to effect that object, and to put an end to a mischief which the present Parliament had the best means of knowing how to appreciate.

Mr. FAWCETT desired to say a few words on the subject, as he thought it desirable that the Government should receive support from all parts of the House. He had no right to speak for anyone but himself; but he should give to the Government, in the course they were now taking, his hearty support. He regarded the Resolution with respect rather to its principle than to its details; and why he proposed to give his cordial support to the Government in this matter was because it seemed to him that the principle upon which the Resolution was based was thoroughly sound, and deserved the support of the House. If Obstruction was to be dealt with, it must be dealt with in one of two ways. It might be dealt with by altering the Rules of the House, and if that were done it seemed to him that the remarks of the Chancellor of the Exchequer were unanswerable—that in punishing the action of one Member the whole House would be virtually punished, and its privileges and rights interfered with. The Government had, he thought, done wisely in proceeding on an entirely different tack, and in seeking to punish the individual Member who was found to be guilty of Obstruction instead of altering the Rules of the House. He was aware that an opinion had been expressed, in the course of the discussion, that the Resolution did not go far enough, and was not adequate to the occasion. It would be easy to elicit a cheer by proposing some more drastic measure; but he thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer had shown a most wise discretion if, in his taking action on the first occasion, the chief charge that could be brought against his proposals was that they were inadequate. The House of Commons never showed itself to so much advantage as when it refused to be influenced in its action by panic; and if experience should prove that the Resolution was inadequate, it would be far better then to increase its stringency, than, in the first instance, to propose a Resolution which was so stringent that it could not be carried out, and therefore would have to be subsequently relaxed. He felt bound to say that he did not think the Chancellor of the Exchequer, representing the Government, had shown any undue alacrity in dealing with this subject. Certainly, the way in which Obstruction had been dealt with during the last two or three Sessions had not conduced to the dignity and reputation of the House. Three years ago the House was in a panic, and he (Mr. Fawcett), along with the hon. Member for Liskeard (Mr. Courtney), incurred reproach for objecting to what was then done, when the House sat all night with a determination to punish Obstruction by passing some 20 Bills through their various stages. That attempt at a remedy was a ridiculous farce, for it punished the innocent rather than the guilty, while legislation was carried on hurriedly, which ought to have been the subject of careful consideration.

The way in which Obstruction had been met since did not conduce to the reputation of the House of Commons. He did not know, moreover, whether it was by accident or not; but certainly what was done with regard to the Irish Intermediate Education Bill, and last year with regard to Irish University Education, bore the interpretation that, to obtain money for particular purposes, hon. Members had only to obstruct the Business of the House. He believed he was expressing the opinion of many Members when he said he hoped that in future Obstruction would be met with more firmness and in a different spirit. He referred to these matters, not in order to revive past and forgotten controversies, but to show how very much better was the action now proposed by the Government, because the cardinal spirit of the Resolution was that if anyone offended against the Rules of the House the offender should be punished, and not the innocent. Therefore it was that he gave it his cordial support. Both sides of the House had, perhaps, shown too much readiness to make political capital out of this matter at the expense of their opponents; but the spirit which had been shown that evening augured well for the future, and the country would know that, whatever might be the Party differences which prevailed, there was no difference between the Liberals and the Conservatives in their firm determination to do all in their power to preserve the legislative efficiency of the House, and to do all they could, if the Government gave them the requisite assistance, to maintain the dignity and reputation of Parliament, which all alike cherished.

MR. O'DONNELL said, as it seemed to be a welcome part of that discussion that that Motion should receive support from all corners of the House, he hoped it would not be deemed an unwelcome exhibition of feeling on his part if he also contributed his slight meed of approbation to the proposition. As a Member of that Irish Party, not a single Member of which had ever been named by the Chair, it was entirely from the point of view of a disinterested spectator that he ventured to criticize the propositions of the Government. It certainly seemed strange that the Government only now brought forward any measure proposing to deal with the evil described in such harrowing terms, and it was still more strange, because in the present Session the Government had given them nothing whatever to obstruct. It was not now necessary to impose delay for the purpose of duly considering the wrongs of the Transvaal, or for the purpose of obtaining due consideration for the British soldier subject to the ignominy of the lash. The only considerable measure proposed by the Government was the Criminal Code Bill; and the hon. and learned Members for Taunton (Sir Henry James) and Oxford (Sir William Harcourt) had undertaken to dispose of that measure to the thorough satisfaction of the Liberal Party. But while he entirely approved of the principle of the Motion, he regarded the whole of these proceedings as a mere flash in the pan, designed to dazzle the eyes of the Parliamentary electorate. He supported the principle of this Motion, because, so far as there was any good in it, it was merely a repetition of the common law, so to speak, of the House, which declared wilful obstruction to be a most grave contempt of the House, and for punishing which the House possessed the most abundant and complete means. This Resolution, therefore, was but a limitation of the Speaker's authority, and but a truncated edition of the existing Common Law. Two observations of the Chancellor of the Exchequer conclusively demonstrated the utter absence of any foundation for the special complaint alleged as justification for this Motion. He said, first, that during the last few Sessions the pressure of Public Business and the difficulty of getting any kind of legislation through the House had vastly increased. He admitted, also, that there was a vast increase in the Business transacted, and that a great number of Members took part in its transaction. In the face of these two admissions, was it conceivable for a single instant that any mere tightening of the Rules of Order, or limitation of unreasonable loquaciousness on the part of any hon. Members, any mere trimming, lopping, or pruning of the oratorical flourishes of this Member or that, would really avail to bring the Imperial Legislature, as it was now called, to a level with this unnatural mass of Business? These admissions proved that the Legislature was getting more and more clumsy—necessarily getting more and more clumsy—in the discharge of its functions. That being so, it was mere child's play to occupy time with propositions to limit the talkativeness of this or that Member. Parliament was obstructed, because it was trying to do 50 times more than it could possibly perform with any efficiency. The regulation of debate could not in any way compensate for the inefficiency necessarily caused by the attempt to despatch Business, which Parliament had neither the time nor the opportunity nor the capacity to perform. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and other Ministerial supporters had lamented the deterioration of Parliament in the estimation of the country. He ventured to think, on the contrary, that at no time had it stood higher in general estimation than at present. Neither with the Parliaments of Walpole, nor of Pitt, could the present Parliament be for a moment compared. If hon. Members spoke of unfit and improper persons being now and then returned, they lived, at any rate, in the time of pure elections. Historians could not say of this House, as scores of historians had said of former Houses, that it was venal, and that the votes of Members had a market at the Treasury, just as there was a market for fat cattle at Smithfield. Such expressions could only be looked upon as part of the ornament, and not of the substance, of debate. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said it would be impossible to entertain for an instant the idea of taking away from Parliament any portion of its Business. He would only reply that there were already in this country a large number of subordinate legislatures in the different municipalities whose decisions were perfectly final in regard to the business intrusted to their care. An extension of that principle could not be regarded as the extreme measure which the Chancellor of the Exchequer thought it, so long as all Imperial concerns were still dealt with by the Imperial Parliament. He ventured to predict that before long it would be absolutely necessary to delegate to some subordinate body or bodies a very considerable portion of the Business at present transacted by the House; and until that was done, whether it was called Home Rule, or Local Self Government, or anything else, the present glut of Business, misnamed Obstruction, would not be removed. He most decidedly and strongly protested against the insinuation that the authority of the Chair had been disregarded of late. If it had been so, instant punishment would have fallen on the offender. Even in one or two cases where hastiness of expression, heat of debate, or something else had betrayed Members into a breach of Rules or into an apparent disrespect of the Chair, an offence which had been by no means confined to that part of the House, very ample apologies had always been tendered, and none were more frank and ready in tendering that reparation than Irish Members. In fact, the chief reason why he supported this Motion was that it maintained the authority of the Chair, without which minorities would be constantly exposed to continual plots of their opponents. Without the authority of the Chair, however honest his motives, no Member could escape from being interfered with by a mere majority. In anything he might say with regard to the Speaker, of course he must be understood to refer to the Office in general, and not to the present occupant of the Chair personally. Nowhere, he was sure, was a warmer respect felt for the Speaker than among the Members with whom he was in the habit of acting. As he had said, in the case of wilful obstruction, everything necessary—the law, the custom, and the procedure—was at hand ready to be exercised at any moment. This Motion provided that when a Member was named by the Speaker a Motion might be made suspending that Member from the service of the House. Was this proposed appeal from the judgment of the Speaker to the House a reality or a sham? If a sham, like all other shams, it partook of the nature of a falsehood. If it was a reality, then, after the Speaker had declared a Member guilty of wilful obstruction, the House could say that he was not guilty, and so would pass a censure on the Speaker. On the other hand, if Members, when appealed to, felt themselves bound to support the ruling merely because the Speaker had ruled it, what could be more unreal, absurd, and ludicrous? In the Amendments he had put on the Paper he had endeavoured to formulate two alternatives. He preferred to maintain, as far as possible, what he conceived to be the existing Order of the House, and to leave to the

Speaker the very largest share in the maintenance of Order. Nay, more; if there was any special reason for dealing with any special evil, he should wish the Speaker to take upon himself the responsibility of naming the Member guilty of obstruction; and the very fact of that declaration should be sufficient justification for at once inflicting on the offending Member the punishment of suspension. To pretend that this Motion supported the authority of the Speaker was doubly unsatisfactory, for it weakened his authority really, while it did not provide a single safeguard for a Member whose conduct was called in question. They knew the fact that the conduct denounced in Ministerial journals, which suppressed the reports upon which they based their charges of obstruction, occurred during the transaction of Business in very thin Houses. The magnificent array of Ministerial supporters, who had come down in such numbers and with such an exhibition of zeal to support the authority of the Chair, was usually conspicuous by its absence during the dull and dry discussions of ordinary Business. In fact, so great was the reluctance of the Ministerial majority to have anything to do with the dull and prosaic details of legislation, that a special club had been built for them, and a special system of signals arranged, so that these ardent Members could be tinkle-tinkled in to give their valuable votes in divisions after the discussion of questions from which they had been careful to abstain. These men would form the court and tribunal to try appeals from the decision of the Speaker on questions of obstruction. A Member would be named, the bell would ring in St. Stephen's Club as well as in other places, and where previously there were 10 or 15 or 20 Members discussing Business there would be 40 or 50 hastening through the underground passage, especially constructed for their convenience, ready to vote without a moment's enlightenment on the subject. It would not be very difficult to imagine how that vote would be given. He himself, if some Member of the Conservative Party were named, would be very strongly tempted, as Members of that Party would invariably be tempted, to give his support to the authority of the Speaker; because, in 99 cases out of 100, the Speaker would be in the right. If Members did not vote in that blind manner, they would vote on information derived from some Member on their own side, and most probably from a Whip. Nothing, therefore, could be more fallacious, absurd, unreal, or fundamentally untrue, than the appeal thus proposed to be given by this Motion. The Speaker, having accepted Office, had undertaken the duty of maintaining Order in that House, and if, consequently, he was called upon to name a Member, he must perform that painful duty; but when he had done that it was idle to suppose that either the dignity of the Chair would be vindicated or Order maintained by appealing from that decision to a scratch House gathered from the dining-room, smoking room, and St. Stephen's Club. It would be an appeal not only to an uninformed and ignorant House, utterly unacquainted with what had taken place, but it would also be an appeal to a Ministerial majority. That was a most important consideration. The Speaker impartially kept both sides in Order; but was it imaginable or conceivable that a Ministerial majority, whether Liberal or Conservative, would be an impartial tribunal to which to appeal? It was the especial duty of the Whips to see that there was always a Ministerial majority about when Government Business was under discussion or was expected to come on, and they must also have a sufficient number of trusty followers ready to make a House, in case the hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar), for instance, proposed a count. The essential point was that in nine cases out of ten the House that would be called upon to decide the appeal would be a Ministerial House, while it was equally certain that in nine cases out of ten the Member accused obstructing Business would not belong to the Ministerial Party. Thus the appeal would be not only to an uninformed House, but to one which was naturally prejudiced against the obnoxious Member. He need not further point out the absurdity of such a proposal; common sense condemned it. Again, could it be doubted that if the South African Bill, Prisons' Bill, the County Boards Bill, and the Army Discipline and Regulation Bill, had been Liberal measures, the Conservative Party would never have raised this outcry? During the passing of the Irish Church Bill and the Army Purchase Bill there had been Conservative obstruction, and it was then from the Liberal Party that the outcry of obstruction came; at present, however, the outcry came from the Conservatives, because they formed the Ministerial Party. It was to such judges, who were perfectly certain beforehand to be partial, that the Government proposed to intrust the appeal from the decision of Mr. Speaker, and to ask for a decision as to the suspension of an Opposition Member. In his opinion, so far as there was any appeal from the authority of Mr. Speaker, the appeal proposed by the Government Motion was a bad one. He should do all in his power to prevent an appeal from the Speaker's authority; and if he saw any possibility of preventing that injudicious and absurd step being taken—a step equally calculated to lower the respect in which the Chair ought to be held, and the respect in which the decision of the House ought to be held—he should do all he could to provide against having this tribunal—a mere tribunal composed of the *habitués* of St. Stephen's Club—to vote on a question with which they were entirely unacquainted. He hoped hon. Members opposite would admit that he had endeavoured to make his remarks strictly germane to the question in hand, and he would only detain the House for a few moments longer. Whilst supporting this proposal of the Government, and whilst opposing the Amendments which had been brought forward, he might state that he was not there, for a single instant, to assert that obstruction was always objectionable, nor was he there to deny that he had obstructed certain measures. He was there to assert, on the contrary, that he had obstructed on three or four occasions most deliberately. He was proud of what he had done in that respect, and in similar cases he would do the same with the full permission of the Chair. The hon. Member for Hackney (Mr. Fawcett) had referred to the South African Bill. It was perfectly true—and he had made the declaration both in and out of the House—that when he saw that it was impossible to procure any reform in the South African Bill he had done all in his power to kill it by obstruction, or to thoroughly damage it thereby in the opinion of the country. He had made his opposition to that Bill solely upon its merits, because it was bad. The hon. Member for Plymouth (Mr. Sampson Lloyd) had stated that the opposition to that measure had been conducted by a body of Members who had no more connection with, and took no more interest in, South Africa than if South Africa was in the moon. This, however, was not the case, for during the whole progress of that Bill he (Mr. O'Donnell) had been in close connection with the representatives of the Transvaal Republic. He could place before hon. Members a letter of thanks from the Attorney General of the Transvaal Republic for the opposition which he had given to the measure; and he could also place before them letters of thanks upon the same subject from the President of the Transvaal Commission in Holland, the venerable Professor of International Law at the University, who had been in constant correspondence with himself, and he believed also with the hon. Member for Liskeard (Mr. Courtney), during the whole of the debates upon South African affairs. Again, he could also place hon. Members in a position to read his letters to *The Times* upon the South African Bill, by which they would that see every single event which he had stated would take place had taken place as a consequence of that South African legislation. He ventured to remind hon. Members that he had not entered the House of Commons as a novice in public affairs, and he had been obliged, on one or two occasions, to refer to his profession as journalist. Before he had entered that House he had been in the habit for some years of writing on public affairs; and with all respect for the honour conferred upon him by his election as a Member of that House, he did not hesitate to say that there were among the journalists in the Gallery some dozen men, the opinion of any one of whom he would prefer to that of a hundred Members of Parliament. Speaking personally, there was one honour which no Ministerial diatribes could deprive him of, and that was that for many years past he had been an humble member of a body which was certainly equal to a large number of Members of that House in knowledge of public affairs both at home and abroad. There were comparatively few journalists in the House at that time; but he was perfectly sure that, with the extension of the suffrage and the cheapening of the means of getting into Parliament, the House would be hereafter distinguished—as in the case of foreign Assemblies—by those who were the cream and the flower of intellect in the country—the journalists of Great Britain. He had deliberately obstructed the flogging clauses of the Army Discipline Bill; while the other day—and he hoped that this would be the only opportunity of obstruction afforded by the Government during the present Session—he had obstructed the Irish Relief Bill, because Her Majesty's Government had apparently intended to make it a measure of disfranchisement. They imported into that Bill all the disfranchising effects of relief under the ordinary Poor Law system; and when the hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) proposed to fill up that gap with a new clause, Her Majesty's Government refused to give any pledge that the clause would be accepted. On that occasion not only he (Mr. O'Donnell), but the hon. Members for Galway and Louth, besides a large number of other Members of Parliament, with malice aforethought, and without a single particle of remorse, but, on the contrary, with a perfect confidence that they were only doing their duty to their countrymen, and that they would receive the thanks both of the English and Irish people for their obstruction on that occasion, deliberately obstructed that Bill. They had informed the Chief Secretary for Ireland and his distinguished Colleagues that the Bill should not go forward until the principle contained in the clause proposed by the hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) had been agreed to. The Government had refused; but after they had slept upon it they came down on Friday night and swallowed the clause of the hon. Member, just as if they had never contemplated anything else but falling in with the wishes of the Irish Obstructionists. He stated, deliberately, that not only had he obstructed two Government measures, but that he was prepared in case of necessity to obstruct measures of the same kind in future. It was, however, perfectly untrue that he had ever obstructed the Business of the House. Let the Government bring in good Bills and they would meet with no obstruction from his part. Let them bring in a Bill for raising Ireland to the same political rights as those enjoyed in England; let them do justice both to Ireland and to England, and there would be no obstruction from him. Otherwise, notwithstanding the Motions before the House, and in the face of the re-furbishing of these arms and armour, he assured the Government that there would be just as much Obstruction in the future as there had been in the past. He thanked the House warmly for giving him so attentive a hearing on both sides, and trusted that he had not exceeded the bounds of legitimate explanation in defining his position with regard to this question of Obstruction.

MAJOR NOLAN said, there had been a general concurrence of approbation with regard to the proposed measures on both sides of the House; but from that approbation he ventured heartily to dissent. He came from a large constituency in the West of Ireland, and could not help considering that he and the rest of the Irish Members were present in the House of Commons, so far as domestic legislation was concerned, under protest. He and his Colleagues had voted for a Parliament in Dublin, and were ready to vote for it again. In the position in which Irish Members were placed, there were necessarily many points upon which they were obliged to differ from other Members of the House, with whom they must sometimes occasionally come into collision, and, unfortunately, not only in matters of opinion, but also with the opinion of the people of England. When a collision occurred it was, no doubt, a great inconvenience. He would have preferred that any change which it might be necessary to make should have been in the direction of changing the Rules, and not in the direction of making penal measures against individuals. If a rule were made, for instance, that a Member could only speak once a week or once a fortnight, it would not so much matter, because the Irish Members could then take their share in the debates; but not being assimilated to the rest, there was greater danger of a large number of Members being brought against them than there was of the same thing happening to English Gentlemen on the other side of the House. Nothing could be more disastrous to the whole body of Members and to the country behind them than that there should exist the power of punishing any single Member. There was more danger to hon. Members and to the country in striking at the Leader of a Party than under any other circumstances. Some strong speeches had been made that evening in support of those measures which had been proposed by hon. Members since the introduction of the very mild Resolution on the part of the Government. But he desired to point out that if they continued to proceed at the same rate the freedom of Parliament would be very much lessened. On the other hand, they might punish three or four Members who had the audacity to obstruct bad measures; but this state of things would not last for ever as against Ireland, and it was the Conservatives who would, in the long run, suffer by the institution of these penal measures. Some day, perhaps in the next 10 or 15 years, if they continued to go on as they were proceeding on that occasion, he thought that some of the Conservative Leaders would rue the Rules that might be passed that evening. He knew that it was perfectly useless to attempt to stop the progress of these measures; but he knew also that they would, to a great extent, destroy the freedom of Parliament at any rate for Irish Members. As he strongly disapproved of the measures of the Government he should decidedly oppose them.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Shaw.*)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, if the debate is to be adjourned I hope it will be on the understanding that we are to proceed with it this day. We might, at all events, come to a decision to-night upon the principle contained in this Resolution, which, I think, has met with general acquiescence; the discussion of details may probably occupy some time, and I cannot, of course, think of asking the House to proceed with them at so late an hour. But if we come to a division upon the Amendment of the hon. Member for Plymouth (Mr. Sampson Lloyd), I should be glad if that were taken to-night, or otherwise if the hon. Member would withdraw his Amendment. What I should propose would be, in any case, that the debate should stand on the Order Book for this day, and I should propose to give Notice that I will move at 4 o'clock to suspend the usual Order for taking Supply on Friday, and the Motions in relation to other Business. There are Resolutions which would probably occupy the greater part of, if not the whole day. Considering the importance of the discussion I think it will be more satisfactory that we should proceed without delay. I wish to take this opportunity of referring to one or two remarks made at the beginning of the evening by the noble Lord the Member for the Radnor Boroughs (the Marquess of Hartington), that I have not on this occasion done that which it has been usual to do upon questions of Order—namely, that I have not conferred either with the authorities of the House or with the Leader of the Opposition before placing this Notice on the Paper. That is perfectly true; it was not in my power to do so for several reasons, with which it is not necessary to trouble the House. This, however, is no new matter, as the noble Lord is aware; and within the last few days I have had communications both with the noble Lord and with yourself, Mr. Speaker, with reference to the Motion. of the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate). I can only say, Sir, that there was no intention on my part to show any want of respect or any want of frankness either to yourself or to the noble Lord. It was impossible for me to communicate personally with either before I placed this Resolution on the Paper, and I thought it would be more satisfactory that it should come in upon the responsibility of the Government being aware of the general views of yourself and the Opposition, than that I should deal with it as has been suggested by the noble Lord.

MR. HANBURY, in the absence, and with the authority, of the hon. Member for Plymouth (Mr. Sampson Lloyd), begged leave to withdraw the Amendment before the House.

MR. CHILDERS said, his impression was that it was almost without precedent that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should appeal to hon. Members to withdraw the Motions which they had on the Paper, and it was very awkward to set up any fresh precedent with respect to Supply on Friday nights.

MR. SPEAKER pointed out that there was a Motion before the House, and that the hon. Member for North Staffordshire (Mr. Hanbury) desired on behalf of the hon. Member for Plymouth (Mr. Sampson Lloyd) to withdraw the Amendment of that hon. Member. He reminded the hon. Member for North Staffordshire that this could not be done until the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) had withdrawn his Motion for the adjournment of the debate.

MR. SHAW could not accede to that proposal; he might probably have to address the House at some length, and he could more conveniently do so on another occasion.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

House adjourned at One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 27*th February*, 1880.

MINUTES.]—*Sat First in Parliament*—The Lord Ponsonby, after the death of his brother.

GALLERY OF CASTS FROM THE ANTIQUE.

MOTION FOR PAPERS.

EARL COWPER, in rising to move that the following Papers be laid upon the Table:—

> "A memorial presented to the Prime Minister in August 1877 by a Committee presided over by the Duke of Westminster on the subject of the formation of a Gallery of Casts from the Antique; also, a communication from the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to the Duke of Westminster on the same subject dated 16th July 1879,"

said, their Lordships would agree with him in the opinion that everything calculated to encourage Art in this country deserved support. Two years ago, he had asked a Question on this subject, and the noble Earl at the head of the Government, in his answer, acknowledged the importance of the matter, and had given him an assurance that there would be no difficulty on the score of expense. He had also undertaken to bring the question to a satisfactory conclusion during the Recess. The Recess passed away and nothing was done; and it appeared by the communication addressed to the Duke of Westminster by the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury on the 16th of July, 1879, that the subject was now indefinitely postponed owing to the condition of the finances of the country. All that was asked of the State was a sum of £10,000, either in a lump or in instalments of £2,000 spread over five years. Considering that this course had been advocated by almost all the principal artists and sculptors of the day, by the heads of the National Gallery and the British Museum, and by most of the head masters of our great Public Schools, and by many others; considering, also, that our expenditure in other matters was counted by many millions, he did not think that so small a sum was worth being taken into consideration. He wanted their Lordships to look at what other countries were doing. Germany had suffered far more than we had from the depression of trade; and notwithstanding this, and the extent of her gigantic Armies, she was spending large sums in carrying on excavations in Olympi and Asia Minor. There was some talk of their being stopped; but he believed they would still be gone on with. Four years ago France had begun a collection of casts at the Louvre, which would soon be completed. Sorry as he was for the disappointment, he was almost more sorry for the reason assigned. A reckless expenditure on war and preparation for war, if it had been reckless, was not made more palatable by an overstrained economy as regarded the arts of peace.

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD: My Lords, I am not at all surprised that the noble Earl opposite, distinguished as he is for his taste and his encouragement of the Fine Arts, should be disappointed in the matters to which he has referred. I am myself disappointed; but I do not think the question could be viewed exactly in the light in which the noble Earl has placed it. This subject must be considered in relation to other claims of a similar character, which have also been made upon the public purse. Now, I think originally when this question was brought forward your Lordships were assured that a collection of Casts from the Antique, as was contemplated, would not be of an expensive character, and would be highly beneficial; but when we had to deal with it, it assumed larger proportions. It so happened that there were several Institutions which had collections connected with the Art and Science of the country that were urging their claims—and claims which one would suppose to be almost irresistible—upon the attention of the Government, and we had to consider the plan which, on the whole, we thought might best suit and satisfy the various claims. It was thought then that it would be desirable that some arrangement should be made by which these Institutions and collections, all tending to the same object—namely, the elevation of the public taste of the country—should be grouped together in some part of the Metropolis, where they might mutually assist each other by their collections. That involved the necessity of a considerable expenditure. At that moment a considerable expenditure for an object that was not of absolute necessity was not looked upon with such dread by the Government as on some other occasions it might have been. The matter has never been neglected. We have been in communication with the authorities of South Kensington, and at one period we were considerably advanced in the direction that the noble Earl wishes—so far, indeed, that a place of deposit for the collection was under consideration. Well, then, time went on, and I need not inform your Lordships of the effect of time upon the finances of the country. The fact is that an æsthetical education is not as compatible as I could wish with financial depression. I sympathize with the feelings of the noble Earl. It is easy, however, to point to the example of other countries, to speak of the general expenditure on great public objects, and to compare that expenditure with the comparatively trifling sum that is required to fulfil the purpose he has in view. But it must not be lost sight of that when the Treasury, in the present state of the finances, comes to a certain decision as regards public expenditure, that resolution is not come to on account of this claim for £2,000 a-year, or £10,000 in all, for a Gallery of Casts. Such a conclusion is arrived at from a large consideration of a great many items which, individually, may not be of vast importance, but which, collectively, make a sum which must be considered when the finances of the country are not in a flourishing condition. I hope the finances of the country may recover — if not rapidly, that they will, at all events, recover; and I can assure the noble Earl that I will do my utmost to fulfil the wishes which I believe are generally entertained in this House, and by all persons in the country who appreciate the advantage of having a collection of models of the remains of ancient sculpture. I can say little more to the noble Earl. I will read, if he likes it, the answer to the Memorial of the noble Duke (the Duke of Westminster). It is of a very prosaic character I confess. It is dated July 16, 1879—

> "My Lord Duke,—The Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury have carefully considered the statement which your Grace laid before the Prime Minister with reference to the formation of a Gallery of Casts from the Antique. Their Lordships willingly admit that the institution of such a Gallery would be an advantage to the cause of Art, and are not indisposed to consider the question favourably when a fitting opportunity arrives. The matter, however, cannot be said to be one of pressing importance; and, in the present state of the finances of the country, my Lords feel it their duty to refrain from asking Parliament to impose any fresh charges on the public purse unless they are justified by urgent necessity. Under these circumstances, their Lordships regret that at present they cannot say more than that they will bear the subject in mind for future consideration.
>
> "I have the honour to be, &c.,
>
> "H. SELWIN-IBBETSON.
>
> "His Grace the Duke of Westminster, K.G."

That is, I admit, not an answer, on the whole, very satisfactory. It is a painful position for the Government to be placed in to refuse some expenditure on an admirable object advocated by some of the most distinguished Members of your Lordships' House; but I am clearly of opinion that it was the duty of the Government to take that course. I earnestly hope that the time will arrive without much delay when we shall be able to carry that object into effect. Of course, we have no objection to granting the Papers.

Motion *agreed to.*

A memorial presented to the Prime Minister in August 1877 by a Committee presided over by the Duke of Westminster on the subject of the formation of a Gallery of Casts from the Antique:

Also, a communication from the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to the Duke of Westminster on the same subject dated 16th July 1879:

Ordered to be laid before the House.—(*The Earl Cowper.*)

COAL MINES—LEYCETT COLLIERY EXPLOSION.—QUESTION.

EARL DE LA WARR asked, Whether there was any objection to lay upon the Table of the House the Report of the Inspector of Mines with regard to the Leycett Colliery accident, and also the Report of the coroner's inquest? This he considered a matter of the gravest importance, as it was well known the colliery in question was a dangerous one, inasmuch as a similar accident had taken place there in September last. He thought it would be satisfactory if the Government favoured them with some information with respect to the September explosion.

EARL BEAUCHAMP, in reply, said, that the coroner's inquest in the second instance was adjourned from January to the 18th of this month, and then further adjourned for the purpose of giving an opportunity to the relatives of the victims to bring forward additional evidence. The Government, therefore, could not at the present time lay the Report of the inquest upon the Table. Mr. Wheelhouse had been instructed to watch the proceeding on the part of the Government, as he did at the inquiry concerning the accident which took place in September last. The Report of the first accident had been sent in to the Home Office, and if the noble Earl would move for it the Government would lay it on the Table of the House.

EARL DE LA WARR moved for the Report of the September inquiry.

Motion *agreed to.*

Address for—

Report of William St. James Wheelhouse, Esq., Q.C., M.P., on the Leycett Colliery Accident of September 1879.—(*The Earl De La Warr.*)

STATE OF IRELAND.

MOTION FOR RETURNS.

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN, in moving for—

"A Return of the number of ejectments from agricultural holdings that have been served, the number in which decrees have been pronounced, and the number in which decrees have been executed in each county in Ireland every year from the 1st of January 1860 to the 1st of January 1880; the Return to distinguish between ejectments for non-payment of rent, or on notice to quit, or for breach of contract, or for any other cause: Also, Return of the number of cases of intimidation in Ireland to prevent the payment of rent or occupation of land which came under the notice of the police during the year 1879, and the number of prosecutions undertaken and convictions obtained in such cases,"

said, that as the present condition of Ireland and the extraordinary distress that existed there and the general and ordinary circumstances of that country had lately attracted a great deal of attention in and out of Parliament, he made no apology for bringing the question before their Lordships' House. They had some conversation the other day about the destitution at present existing in Ireland. He should not allude particularly to that now; but there was one question he would like to ask, though it related to a Bill that passed the House yesterday—the Seeds (Ireland) Bill. He need scarcely say it had nothing to do with any matters of detail; but he had lately heard that there was a difficulty in obtaining good seed potatoes; that the supply of Scottish seed was exhausted. He trusted his information was wrong. Perhaps the Lord President might be able to say whether, as far as the Government were aware, they was any scarcity of seed? Obviously, there was no use passing a Seeds (Ireland) Bill, and offering money, if there was no seed to be bought. The distress would pass; but the causes that produced it would remain. Could anyhing be done to remove those causes? Certainly, the experience of the past was almost sufficient to make men despair. Sir Charles Trevelyan, writing in 1848, under circumstances similar in their nature, though much more serious, said—

> "Among all our discouragements there are not wanting many and sure grounds for hope of the future. The best sign of all is that the case of Ireland is at last understood. Irish affairs are no longer a craft, a mystery; the abyss has been fathomed, the Famine has acted with a force which nothing could resist, and has exposed to view the real state of the country, so that he who runs may read."

He went on to explain that one of the chief evils of the country was the fact that the Irish were possessed of a strange delusion, and were prone to depend upon the Government, the State, instead of depending upon their own industrial exertions. He said that the terrible trial that Ireland underwent during the

Famine years had awakened them from this dream and dispelled this allusion, and, quoting from a speech of the late Lord Mayo, he added—

> "The prosperity of Ireland is only to be found in her own strong arm. We are able to help ourselves. We will no longer be dependent on the precarious assistance received from other lands. In a short time we shall have among us more industry and exertion—less politics and more plough; less argument and more action; less debating and more doing."

It was lamentable to reflect how that prophecy remained unfulfilled, and to see how completely deceived in his anticipations for the future Sir Charles Trevelyan was. The problem was difficult; but its difficulty ought rather to stimulate inquiry than produce apathy or indifference. We must not be impatient. The good time looked forward to would come in time. How soon it would come depended much upon whether the Government did or did not encourage the foolish propensities of the people. A new generation had fallen into the same errors as their fathers, and appeared to have gained small experience from the past. We saw now precisely the same want of self-reliance, the same desire to rely upon State aid, the same clamour for Government money and for the institution of Government relief works. It might be popular to accede to a clamour of this kind, but it was most injudicious; and it would result again, as it did before, in much evil to the country. In certain circumstances, it might be advisable for the State to foster an industry growing up under difficulties; but nothing could be more unwise than to endeavour to create a trade artificially. If the seed grew naturally it might be wise to tend it with care until it grew strong enough to subsist independently; but it was false economy to lay out large sums of money in planting the seed in soil to which it was not naturally adapted. The plan of forcing the development of the country was tried in 1847, and it failed lamentably. Large sums of money were laid out in making roads, in constructing piers, in endeavouring to produce fisheries. Excellent roads were made, leading to nothing, and they led to nothing at the present day. Harbours and piers were constructed and had fallen into decay. Fisheries were started which had dwindled almost to nothing, or had entirely disappeared. Experienced fish curers were imported from Scotland, money was provided to furnish boats and nets and fishing tackle, and even fishermen's clothing; but there were two things necessary for a prosperous fishery, which were not provided—namely, fish and markets. If there was an abundant supply of fish on the West Coast of Ireland, and if the weather was such that fishing boats could keep the sea and catch them, and if the produce of the sea could be brought to market at remunerative prices, it was perfectly certain that the fisheries would have developed themselves. Private enterprize must be safely relied upon to utilize all the natural resources of a country. As a matter of fact, the only thriving fisheries were those which had sprung up naturally and which enjoyed facilities of communication, such as Galway and Kinsale. There was a large sum of money in the hands of the Commissioners of Public Works, sufficiently ample to give encouragement to any legitimate effort. He did not believe that any country could be benefited by laying out public money in schemes into which the money of private individuals did not show a disposition to flow. He thought that in considering the condition of Ireland sufficient attention had not been paid to the question of the trade of the country. Mr. Bright a short time ago made a long and able speech at Birmingham upon the subject of Ireland; but though he spoke of and advised remedies for the Land Question, that right hon. Gentleman scarcely touched upon the trade question. Mr. Bright, in dealing with the Land Question in Ireland, spoke of the various confiscations that had taken place. He believed, as a matter of fact, that most of the land in Ireland had been purchased from time to time; but whether it be purchased or not there must be some limitation in time, and it was absurd, practically speaking, to talk of restoring land to people whose forefathers might possibly have owned it several centuries ago. The ownership of land had always been changing in Ireland; originally there was no such thing as individual ownership in the land. When English law prevailed English customs were introduced and private ownership instituted; and since that time, by conquests and rebellion, by civil war, by confiscation, arising from various causes, no doubt land had changed hands very frequently at more or less remote periods, and it would be quite impossible to restore it to the descendants of the original owners. Mr. Bright mentioned confiscations under James I., Cromwell, and William III. The recollection of these confiscations might rankle in the bosoms of the people, and cause ill-feeling. That could only be cured by common sense and time. It was idle to suppose that by suddenly transferring the ownership to the present occupiers they would be restoring property that was violently, and fraudulently, and wrongfully taken from their forefathers under those confiscations. If the principle of restitution was correct, why should it be confined to Ireland? How could they attempt to restore property that was confiscated in the above-mentioned reigns without also restoring to the Roman Catholic Church all the Church property which was confiscated in England? It would be impossible to find the representatives of the individuals who suffered by those confiscations; but the same body, the same corporation, that held land confiscated and granted to laymen, existed, and could be found without difficulty. If they went back 200 or 250 years, why not go back 300 or 350? Why not, for the matter of that, go back to the Norman Conquest? Where was the limitation of time to come in? Why did people, in speaking of Ireland, concentrate all their attention on the land? Mr. Bright talked a good deal of the evils and injustice resulting from the way in which the land of Ireland had been treated by England. Why did he not say something about the manner in which the trades and manufactures of Ireland had been treated? Trades had been confiscated in more recent times than he talked of, and immense mischief resulted therefrom. Various trades were, from time to time, originated in, and prospered in, Ireland. The woollen trade, prosperous in the reigns of Charles II. and James II., was effectually checked by an Act of William III., passed at the instigation of rival manufacturers in England. The cotton manufactories, 50 in number, at Belfast, at the beginning of the present century, were reduced through English imposts, until there were now only three. Five thousand industrious manufacturers were said to have been reduced to poverty by the stoppage of the woollen trade. Thirty thousand people emigrated from Ireland in two years, in consequence of the stoppage of their trades in 1780. The people of the country, practically speaking, ignored the absolute right of ownership of the proprietors of the land. They had created an imaginary partial ownership for themselves, had looked upon themselves as the real proprietors, and had viewed the landlords as a sort of disagreeable institution imposed by Providence upon the country, which they had to put up with. They had looked upon rent, not as a sum of money paid to an owner for the use of that which was his, but as a sort of arbitrary tax imposed upon a conquered people by their conquerors. This imaginary state of things had always more or less existed in Ireland. The Land Act of 1870 had certain inconveniences—most productions of the human intellect had; but he believed it would tend to discourage this sentiment—this belief in imaginary rights — by acknowledging and making tangible those rights which really did exist. Landowners in Ireland were very much abused people; probably the best-abused people in the world. Mr. Parnell and others had poured forth the vials of their wrath upon their devoted heads. The difficulty in Ireland was that the landlords had not capital enough; and it was much to be hoped that measures might pass through Parliament enabling them to relieve themselves of encumbrances, and, by sacrificing portions of their estates, to develop more thoroughly the resources of what was left to them. He did not wish to set himself up as a champion of Irish landlords; but he must say that, in his opinion, no class of men had received so much unmerited abuse. He thought an Irish landlord occupied the most difficult position in which it was possible for any man to be placed. He believed, as a rule, they endeavoured to do their duty under the most trying circumstances. After all, Irishmen were but mortals, and no doubt they occasionally failed; but, on the whole, the Irish landlords fulfilled their duties as well as any men in the world could do. The only landlords who were spoken of with praise were those who avowedly were able to spend more upon their properties than they obtained from them, which was as much as to say that land in Ireland ought to be looked upon as an expensive luxury. If a good landlord was a man who could spend more upon the land than he obtained from it the converse must hold true; and it was certain that a class of small proprietors, making their living out of the soil, would form the very worst class of landowners. There could be no doubt that the hardest masters had been those landowners who became possessed of comparatively small quantities of land —the very class, in fact, which would inevitably arise out of any system of peasant proprietorship. The sense of proprietorship was, no doubt, an excellent thing, and he was entirely in favour of a class of small proprietors, if they could be instituted naturally; but such a class could only exist in a country and under climatic conditions favourable to them. He did not believe that these conditions existed in Ireland to any great extent. They were called upon to look at the working of this system in various other countries—France, Belgium, and Switzerland. The excellence of the system was doubtful in France; but, at all events, Ireland could not be compared with any of the before-mentioned countries in point of climate and soil. Because peasant proprietors succeeded in Belgium or France afforded no proof whatever that they would succeed in Ireland. Ireland was not well adapted for spade husbandry. There were no markets for fruit or vegetables. Market gardening and the careful cultivation of small plots of land could not be remunerative without good markets. The climate was such that the country could only be successfully cultivated in comparatively large holdings, and a considerable portion of it was unsuitable for tillage of any kind, and could only be profitably worked for stock raising. He saw some time ago in *The Times* a letter comparing the prosperous state of things in the Channel Islands with the misery in Ireland, and claiming that, the natural circumstances of the countries being the same, the system of land tenure in Ireland must be to blame. Why, the cases were as different as light and darkness. In fact, the writer condemned his own case. He said that in Guernsey there was great competition for land among the skilful mechanics, and he spoke of land fetching £10 an acre rent, and mentioned the profusion of fruit and flowers for sale in the towns. Where was your class of skilful mechanics in Ireland; and where were the soil and climate and market that would enable any human being to make a profit out of land for which he paid £10 an acre by the cultivation of fruit and flowers? It was marvellous how people would go on attributing the evils of Ireland to every cause under the sun; to systems, and government, and everything except the natural causes which could not be changed. If they wanted any example of the working of a system of peasant proprietors it was to England they ought to turn. There was no country in the world with so many excellent markets as England. The soil of England was better, and the climate was better, than that of Ireland. England had had a class—a numerous class—of small owners; but they had almost entirely disappeared from purely natural causes, from want of capital and from the natural peculiarities of the country. Owing to altered circumstances—such as modern improvement in agriculture, and more especially owing to the competition of other countries—they were unable to make a living, they were outrun by tenants having large holdings, and from time to time they sold their little patrimonies and embarked their capital in more paying matters, and had disappeared as a class. But even if peasant proprietorship was advisable, no practical plan by which it could be instituted had been suggested. There were two plans which had been mooted, whereby the occupiers in Ireland might become owners; the one that an enormous sum of money should be granted by the Government, or raised by subscription, to enable them to purchase. Practically, this amounted to making the people a present of the fee-simple value of the land; and it was absurd. The other plan was that the Government should lend the occupiers money at advantageous terms, and enable them to purchase their holdings gradually. This was the plan advocated by Mr. Bright and Mr Parnell; but though the same in principle they differed much in detail. Mr. Bright's plan was perfectly fair, but impracticable; Mr. Parnell's was partially practicable and obviously unfair. Mr. Bright's idea was that the owner's interest in the land should be purchased at the full value by the occupiers, the

Government advancing a certain proportion of the money and becoming the landlord until the capital and interest were paid in a period of 35 years. That could not be done on a large scale. Even supposing that the yearly payments were not more than the present rent, it was obvious that men unable to pay their rent would fall into arrears with the Government, and the consequences would be most disastrous. Mr. Parnell saw this difficulty, and with much common sense declared openly that such a scheme was useless. The value of land in Ireland must be beaten down far below the proper value by means of agitation, by a strike of occupiers against owners, and by various means calculated to render the position of the Irish owners excessively disagreeable and difficult, and then let the State advance money to tenants to purchase their holdings at, say, one-half or two-thirds their real value. By this means the occupiers might very likely be able to get possession of their farms; but they could never, in any circumstances, retain possession of them. What had happened in Ireland indicated surely what would happen if the land were transferred to the occupiers of it. Many would be unable to fulfil their engagements, from extravagance in some cases, from having undertaken what was impossible to accomplish in other cases. Ireland was full of usurers; in every little town and village there were obliging persons ready to advance money at ruinous rates of interest. The people were too kind to each other. Farmers in good circumstances were frequently ruined by having become security for friends in difficulties. Discounting the future, borrowing money at high rates of interest, backing bills for friends who could never take them up, were proceedings not confined to Ireland or to the class of tenant farmers, and he did not believe they had ever conduced to prosperity. That would happen on a large scale if any great change in the ownership of the land were made. Occupiers, owners in embryo, would fall into arrears with the Government. They would borrow money to clear themselves; they would run hopelessly into debt; a bad season would come; they would be sold up by their creditors, and in a very few years land would commence to fall into the hands of the usurers and small shopkeepers, who would let it out. It was, however, quite impossible for the Government to undertake the functions of landlord; and what was now being done by the Church Commissioners would, he believed, conclusively prove that small peasant proprietorships would not answer in Ireland. If Mr. Bright and his friends were convinced to the contrary, why did they not form a corporation or a syndicate, to act between the occupiers and the Government? Let the Government supply them with money on the terms they proposed it should be supplied to tenants. They could offer sufficient security to the Government for money so advanced, and they could hand the money over to such tenants as desired to become owners, and who found an opportunity of doing so. The occupiers would reap all the benefits of Mr. Bright's plan, and the Government would be relieved from a responsibility which no Government should ever dream of undertaking. They had been told by many people that fixity of tenure —failing peasant proprietorship—would be a remedy for all the evils of Ireland. As a matter of fact, he believed the tenant farmers in Ireland had always, practically speaking, enjoyed fixity of tenure. At all events, it was quite certain that no landlord in Ireland could afford to evict capriciously since the Land Act of Mr. Gladstone; and it was worthy of notice that in speaking of the condition of Ireland, the fact that the occupiers were supposed to be, and were, protected by the provisions of that Act was entirely ignored. Of one thing he felt quite certain, and that was that Irish landlords did not get the best rent for their lands, and many tenants in Ireland could, he believed, get better rents when allowed to leave their farms. Much was said about the valuation of Sir Richard Griffiths. It did a great deal of harm, being much too little in some cases and too high in others. He (the Earl of Dunraven) was not in favour of very large holdings. They should be large enough to make farming pay, and to do that they should not be less than a certain size. There could be no doubt that a great deal of the distress existing in Ireland now was due to over-population. The population might be scanty; but it was too numerous. Unfortunately, it was very difficult to make the Irish understand the advantages of emigration. They seemed to have a great prejudice against it, a prejudice which had no doubt been intensified by the fact that the clergy of the country were paid by small dues collected from the population; and in these circumstances it was impossible to expect that the priests would encourage them to reduce the population. He did not say this to cast any discredit upon the Roman Catholic clergy of the country. If it were conceded that the spiritual wants of a population must be supplied, their clergy must be paid; and if they could only be paid in the manner before alluded to, it was essential that the population should be as large as possible, in order that their spiritual requirements should be satisfied. There was another great evil arising from the voluntary system as exercised in Ireland. It must frequently happen that priests depended upon the contributions of numerous poor people smitten with the plague of disaffection. If it was merely that a man depended for his daily bread upon the contributions of persons against whose opinions he might wish to strive, the case would be bad enough. But in such cases there was much more depending on it. Proper provision for the spiritual necessities of the people depended upon it. He marvelled much that more evil effects had not followed from the cause. He believed that the only way to remedy the permanent distress in Ireland consisted in emigration. He did not see why Government should not interfere in this respect. He was aware that schemes of Government emigration were discussed and decided against in the famine years; but circumstances had changed since then. Emigration to the United States or to the British Provinces was a formidable matter in 1847; it was attended with comparatively little material discomfort now. If it was contemplated to employ any money belonging to the State in assisting farmers towards acquiring land at home, it would be much more profitably employed in assisting them to become proprietors in Canada, or in some country where ordinary industry would be perfectly certain to meet with success. He did not set himself up as an authority on Irish affairs. Personally, it did not matter much to him if the land were to be restored to its original proprietors. He could claim to be an aboriginal, and thus would be able to set up a claim to certain lands of noble Lords on the other side of the House. If things were to remain as they were he must be bought out at a fair price. Although he might have some sentimental objects, he must bring his philosophy to his help, and console himself with what the late Lord Stowell once called the sweet simplicity of the Three per Cents. It was a lamentable fact that disloyalty existed in Ireland. The Irish were a people who attached themselves readily to individuals, but not to an abstract idea. Feudal feeling was still very strong within them, and the sentiment of loyalty was one which was easily evoked, provided there was some definite object presented to them calling for the exercise of it. If Ireland had been as much favoured as other parts of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, they would have heard less of Fenianism. Home Rule, in some form or other, had been put forward frequently as a remedy for the discontent of Ireland. Nobody seemed to know exactly what Home Rule was. If it meant throwing upon local governing bodies as much work as possible and relieving the House of Commons from a great mass of labour that might be undertaken elsewhere, he thought with the noble Earl near him (Earl Granville) that it was a desirable thing that a change in that direction should be made, and he could not comprehend why the reform of the Grand Jury system had not been undertaken. But if it meant the repeal of the Union and the institution of a form of government, similar, for instance, to that of Canada, he entirely objected to it. As to an inquiry into Home Rule, how could an inquiry be carried out? It was not a question which could be decided by the people of Ireland alone. There could not be a *plébiscite* to settle the question. It was a question for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Ireland could not for a moment be looked upon as a Colony or Dependency. But if an act was to take place breaking up the United Kingdom; if they were to commit suicide by a sort of happy despatch, and commence dismembering themselves; that appeared to him to be an act of so much importance that all the Dependencies and Colonies of every portion of the Empire would have a right to express their opinions about it. It was difficult for him, as an Irishman, and one who had the welfare of that portion of the United Kingdom at heart, to speak with patience of the iniquitous proceedings that had lately disgraced the country. In the slang of the Western States of America, an "orator" meant a man who readily resorted to physical force — a brawler. With them, in Ireland, a "patriot" would come to be considered a persecutor of his country. These "patriots" were ruining the country. Agitation disturbed men's minds and rendered them incapable of devoting their energies to their business. It destroyed credit. It turned away that which was much needed in Ireland—capital. It reduced the whole value of the country; it tended to break down the moral feelings of the people. Unfortunately for themselves, the Irish were easily led away by these "patriots." This was an evil which could not be avoided as long as liberty of speech was conceded and a free Press existed. There were a number of people in Ireland—a great many returned Americans among them, who emigrated to America because they were too lazy to work at home, and returned home because they were too indolent to labour in America—who were only too ready to join anything which offered them the remotest chance of gaining anything without the exercise of honest industry. Freedom of speech was an excellent thing; but in certain circumstances it produced evil results. It became a question of balancing the good and the evil resulting from it. He was entirely in favour of allowing every licence and liberty of speech and writing; but he maintained that when that liberty was allowed by the State it was the duty of the State to see that the Executive was strong enough to protect the orderly and those who were not affected by exciting utterances. He did not believe that the Executive was strong enough in Ireland. He maintained that the Government had not afforded sufficient protection to the well-disposed in Ireland. He would not trouble their Lordships by enumerating cases. Some cases had been mentioned in the newspapers; but he believed an immense amount of terrorism had been exercised, which had not been mentioned anywhere in public. He believed that in certain districts there were few tenant farmers, among those who were willing to pay their rent, who had not been intimidated, had not been threatened and ordered to withhold their rent, or a portion of it, under various pains and penalties; and he believed they had been deterred by threats from occupying farms from which tenants had been ejected. At any rate, the Returns he asked for would throw much light upon this subject. He would be only too glad to find himself mistaken. If he was right, then a state of things existed disgraceful to any civilized community. If speeches were allowed to be made in public inciting the people to the expression of the most dangerous sentiments, and encouraging them to violate their own legal obligations, and to compel others to join them in that determination, then he said that the Government ought to afford the most ample and complete protection to the well-disposed among the population who were not led away by bad advice, who were anxious to lead orderly lives, who were willing and desirous to fulfil their obligations, but who dared not do so. The Irish were much more influenced in this way than were the people in England, and that was quite natural. It was not the effect of any moral or physical cowardice of the race. For years and years they were compelled to look upon the law as a power to molest and not to protect them. They had imbibed the utmost distrust of it. They had for centuries been accustomed to live in dread of insurrection more or less pronounced; and they did not naturally turn to the law for protection, but tried to make their peace with the disorderly element. A measure of protection amply sufficient for England would not suffice for Ireland. They could not expect much co-operation on the part of the people. Some of the causes of Irish poverty and discontent were beyond the power of man to alter. Others would be cured, and could be cured only by time. One of the causes was over-population in certain districts. Government, he thought, could remedy that evil by encouraging emigration, if not by encouraging trades. Another cause was that the people fell so easily a prey to pestilential persons who poured sweet, but pernicious, poison into their ears. This evil would last, he supposed, until the people became wiser and learned to know their enemies from their friends. But, in the meantime, it was the duty, he conceived, of the Government to afford the most ample protection to all law-abiding people, and he doubted whether they had done so. The noble Earl concluded by moving for the Returns of which he had given Notice.

Moved, That there be laid before this House, "Return of the number of ejectments from agricultural holdings that have been served, the number in which decrees have been pronounced, and the number in which decrees have been executed in each county in Ireland every year from the 1st of January 1860 to the 1st of January 1880; the Return to distinguish between ejectments for non-payment of rent, or on notice to quit, or for breach of contract, or for any other cause: Also, Return of the number of cases of intimidation in Ireland to prevent the payment of rent or occupation of land which came under the notice of the police during the year 1879, and the number of prosecutions undertaken and convictions obtained in such cases."—(*The Earl of Dunraven.*)

LORD CAMPBELL: My Lords, although, by the Forms of the House, no Seconder is necessary, and although my noble Friend is competent, even alone, to defend a Motion like the present, with so much experience of Ireland as he has and so much power to discuss it, I wish to add a few words before the Government reply to him. Everyone connected with that part of the United Kingdom as a landowner, who has recently been in it, seems to be under a kind of obligation to convey, however briefly, to the House the impressions he has formed as to a state of things which deeply occupies the Legislature. The first I would venture to convey is, that, although distress exists, agitation is the leading difficulty to be encountered by the Government; and that unless the agitation had occurred the landlords would have been much better situated to remedy the evils which have fallen on the tenants. As regards the measures to be taken, I concur with my noble Friend, and was glad as he proceeded to remark that he was not inclined to-day—although sometimes he may have been—to defend the system of according nourishment to the able-bodied in distress, without exacting labour in return for it. No doubt, the opposite idea of connecting labour with relief may have had a mischievous result in 1846, because it had an ill-considered application. But with a view to utilize the population, whose hands are so much required on soil now wholly unreclaimed, with a view to prevent abuses inherent to unconditional relief, with a view to uphold the masses against a sense of a demoralizing pauperism, the principle of exacting labour in return for what you give appears to be the true one. On one remarkable occasion, the late Lord Clanricarde, who used to be, perhaps, our first authority in Ireland, pointed out to this House with an emphatic iteration that whatever you do there sound principles should never be departed from. I accede entirely to what has fallen from my noble Friend as to the delusion of supposing that a large class of very small proprietors could add to the resources or the comfort of the people; and wish to share the obloquy which he may bring upon himself by running counter to a fashionable doctrine, of which the truth has been assumed, with hardly a pretence of reasoning upon it. To increase the number of moderate, of middle-sized, and, therefore, resident proprietors might be very useful. To multiply the freeholds of the very lowest order would only stamp and seal the ruin of the country. It would at once extend two fundamental evils—the subdivision of the land and the dependence on potatoes for subsistence. Does anyone imagine that if since the late famine rent had been in absolute abeyance—the equivalent of what is now suggested—the prosperity of Ireland would have been greater than it has been; that more oats would have been cultivated, more bogs reclaimed, more children taught, more cottages rebuilt with a view to decent habitation? My Lords, it is worth while, in a few words, to compress the real facts which justify particular complaint among the Irish population, as they might occur to anyone who, after too long an interval, re-visits it. One is that, from circumstances unavoidable as yet, no branch of Royalty is found there, while the institution of the Lord Lieutenancy has lost a part of the prestige which formerly belonged to it—a remark I make, however, without any reference at all to the present holder of the Office. The second is that the Irish are under the necessity—however struggling and impoverished—of supporting their own clergy, while no such burden falls upon the largest class either in England or in Scotland. A third immediately arises from the second—namely, that the clergy of the masses, thoroughly dependent on them, are led to favour agitation they would willingly resist. During the autumn such a tendency was strongly brought before me. Another evil thoroughly attested is that the Jury Law, in consequence of changes recently adopted, is so defective as to secure impunity for outrage. It may be quite true that not one of these anomalies admits of remedy at present. It may be that neither the present nor any future Government is justified in hastily approaching them. But by keeping before our eyes a just conception of the drawbacks to moral and material improvement in that country, we are drawn away from acquiescence in illusory and aggravating remedies; illusory as regards the minds which entertain them, and aggravating to every disorder they profess to take away.

LORD WAVENEY said, he thought their Lordships were very much indebted to the noble Earl for the exhaustive manner in which he had brought this question forward. With regard to the trade of Ireland, it struck him that of late years it had not been adequately developed. Noble Lords would remember that there was a revival of trade and manufactures in 1847, and he hoped the year 1881 would be similarly distinguished. As far as the question of Home Rule was concerned, he could say from personal knowledge that in Ulster there was no element of disorganization more distasteful to the tenant-right farmers than the idea of Home Rule. He wished to point out that if the Railway Bill for making a line from Letterkenny to Donegal had not been rejected last year the necessary works would have afforded much employment in that part of the country.

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND AND GORDON: I find no fault with the noble Earl (the Earl of Dunraven) for the interesting and able statement which he has made as to the present condition of Ireland. It is very useful that anyone so intimately acquainted with the subject as he is should take an opportunity of giving your Lordships and the public the benefit of his experience of that country and the views he entertains with regard to all the important matters on which he has touched. I feel sure I shall be forgiven by the noble Earl for saying that the terms of his Motion scarcely led me to believe that he would enter upon so large and wide a discussion as that which he has brought under our consideration. I am not at all prepared, nor am I desirous of following the noble Earl in his discussion of the views expressed elsewhere by Mr. Bright and Mr. Parnell, in opposition to the arguments of the noble Earl contradicting those views, because with his opinions I entirely concur. I cannot agree with the noble Lord who last spoke that a peasant proprietary is a fallacy; but I do agree with the noble Earl who introduced the discussion that a peasant proprietary in Ireland, as well as in England, would be a great mistake. I agree that large holdings have proved, and will prove, a benefit to Ireland. It has been said, in the course of this discussion, that there is a great danger in allowing large sums of money to go from this country to be expended in Ireland. I can assure your Lordships, with the warning before us of what has taken place, that it is not our intention, nor do we believe it will be the effect of any of the measures adopted by the Government, to reproduce any such state of things as prevailed in former years. The noble Earl has spoken of various trades carried on between Ireland and England as having been put an end to by the action of this country; and, amongst others, he mentioned the cattle trade. Well, the cattle trade between the two countries is in a flourishing condition. It has been benefited very much by recent legislation, which for the first time has treated, for the purposes of that trade, those two portions of Her Majesty's Dominions as one and the same country. With regard to emigration, the noble Earl has given us the benefit of his views on that large and important subject. He is of opinion that in many parts of Ireland there is a much larger number of persons than the land there is fit to maintain; and he considers it would be for the benefit of those who remain, as well as for the benefit of those who go, that a certain proportion of the population should emigrate to other places where they would find better means for the employment of their skill and labour. I am not here to dispute the conclusions at which the noble Earl has arrived; but I must point out that emigration is one of the most difficult questions which can be suggested for consideration with regard to Ireland. Rightly or wrongly, there is, on the part of the Irish people, a marvellous indisposition to go from their own country, even to one where they might be better off. Therefore, the subject of emigration with regard to Ireland, if touched at all, must be considered with great care by any Government. With reference to the Motion, I fear it would be almost impossible to give the Returns asked for in the first part of the noble Earl's proposal; but with regard to the last part, which deals with the criminal state of the country, I am told that that information will be embodied in a Return which has been moved for by the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant in the other House. It has not been laid on the Table; but it is already in the hands of the printer. I therefore suggest that the noble Earl should wait until that Return has been presented, when I shall be happy to communicate with him on the subject. I am sorry that, under these circumstances, it is not in the power of the Government to agree with the Motion of the noble Earl.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY regretted that the names of Mr. Bright and Mr. Parnell had been coupled together by the noble Duke.

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND AND GORDON observed that the names referred to had been introduced by the noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Dunraven); and he was, therefore, perfectly in Order in alluding to them.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY said, he should separate the views held by the two Gentlemen. The views expressed by Mr. Parnell were such as no Member of their Lordships' House could approve in any way whatever. So far as Mr. Bright's views were concerned, he believed them to be a development of the policy of the late Government. Certain clauses were proposed to be inserted in the Land Act of that Government which were popularly known as "Bright's Clauses." They were, after full consideration, adopted by Parliament; and he did not think that it was at all an unreasonable or astonishing thing that Mr. Bright should think that possibly some amendment of the law might be effected whereby those clauses might be made to work with greater advantage than they had hitherto done. What had been urged was this—that the operations of the Church Commissioners in enabling tenants to buy portions of the estates sold had been successful, but that, owing to circumstances to which he would not then refer, the clauses in question had not been so successful; and what he understood Mr. Bright to advocate was that, having regard to the operation of the Church Commissioners, the clauses alluded to ought to be given by legislative provision a wider operation. With respect to the question of tenant proprietors it was one which could not be disposed of offhand. No question had more perplexed the economist—on no question was it more difficult to form an opinion. As far as the wild parts of Ireland were concerned, such parts as Connemara and parts of Mayo and Galway, as well as he was able to judge of the country and its circumstances, he could not think that a system of peasant proprietary would be satisfactorily worked. These were very poor parts of the country, suitable only for pasturage, and he feared that no amount of industry or intelligence would make such a system a prosperous one there. If, however, they went to other parts of Ireland more favoured by nature, he was not disposed peremptorily to declare that the system would not be advantageous. Of this he was sure—that it was a misfortune to Ireland that there should be so small a number of proprietors of land in proportion to the population. It was a misfortune to this country also; but the proportion of proprietors in Ireland was much smaller than in this country. The subject, therefore, ought not to be put out of sight; and it might be found that a well-considered scheme for giving larger opportunities, where estates were sold, for tenants to buy their lands and try whether they could not thus improve their condition, would produce greater content, and add to the prosperity of the country.

LORD DUNSANY expressed his regret that the entire Return moved for could not be granted. Its production would be an act of justice to the Irish landlords, showing, as it would, that they had not been guilty of the charges of eviction brought against them.

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN said, he should not press the Motion after what the noble Duke had said.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

House adjourned at Seven o'clock, to Monday next, Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 27*th February*, 1880.

MINUTES.]—NEW WRIT ISSUED—*For* Norfolk (Western Division), *v.* Sir William Bagge, deceased.

PUBLIC BILLS—*Ordered—First Reading*—India Stock (Powers of Attorney) * [93].

Third Reading—Indian Salaries and Allowances* [72], and *passed.*

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

CHESTER GAS BILL.

Standing Order 109 read.

MR. RAIKES said, the Chester Gas Bill was a measure which affected the interests of his constituents; and having become unopposed, it would, in the ordinary course of events, come before him. That, however, was undesirable, considering the relation in which he stood to the City of Chester; and he would, therefore, move—

> "That the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means be discharged from attendance on the Chester Gas Bill, and that the Chairman of the Committee on Standing Orders be appointed Chairman of the Committee on the said Bill."

Motion *agreed to.*

Ordered, That the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means be discharged from attendance on the Chester Gas Bill, and that the Chairman of the Committee on Standing Orders be appointed Chairman of the Committee on the said Bill. — (*The Chairman of Ways and Means.*)

QUESTIONS.

GAME LAWS—LEGISLATION.

SIR DAVID WEDDERBURN asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce during this Session a Game Laws Amendment Bill, similar to that which was introduced by the Lord Advocate during last Session, and which passed through all stages in this House except the final one?

MR. ASSHETON CROSS: No, Sir. It is not the intention of the Government to re-introduce that Bill; but it is the intention of the Lord Advocate to introduce a much larger measure, dealing with the whole subject, which will be applicable to Scotland.

POOR LAW—DISSOLUTION OF THE WITHAM UNION.

MR. ROUND asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether he will be good enough to explain to the House the circumstances under which it is proposed to dissolve the Witham Union, in the county of Essex; and, whether he is aware that the Guardians of both Braintree and Witham Unions are by no means unanimous in their approval of the scheme?

MR. SCLATER-BOOTH: Sir, it is not easy within the compass of an answer to a Question to detail the circumstances which have led to the dissolution of the Witham Union; but, in reply to my hon. Friend, I may say that so long ago as Midsummer, 1877, resolutions were passed by a conference of Guardians representing Unions in Essex, of which Witham was one, recommending the dissolution of the Witham Union and the distribution of the parishes belonging to it among adjacent Unions, and the Local Government Board was invited to hold an inquiry as to the benefits which might result from a re-arrangement of the district generally. In October, 1877, such an inquiry was accordingly held, notice to all parties having been given, and representatives of the parishes interested being present. From the Report of the Inspector, it appeared desirable that the Witham Union should be dissolved, the advantages being diminution of staff expenses, economy and efficiency of administration, and the setting free of the Witham workhouse for some other useful public purpose. In January, 1879, the Guardians of the Witham Union passed a resolution, by 11 votes to 7, in favour of dissolution. It is true that three months later—in April, 1879—this resolution was rescinded by 12 votes to 11; but the matter had then proceeded too far to be dropped with propriety. The proposed change had been publicly recognized as an advantage, and had been sanctioned by the Department of State in which are vested the duty and responsibility of carrying it into effect.

Moreover, engagements with neighbouring Unions as to the allocation of the parishes had grown up. The final decision as to this allocation, which is always a difficult one, has been delayed by various circumstances, but has now been made. It is impossible for a change of this kind to take place without some feeling of objection to it; but I have no reason to doubt that, once made, it will carry with it the advantageous consequences which were originally anticipated.

ARMY — OFFICERS OF THE STAFF ACTING AS NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENTS IN THE FIELD.

MR. HOPWOOD asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether it be the fact that Officers of the Staff in the recent wars in Afghanistan have acted, or are acting, as paid correspondents to newspapers in the United Kingdom or India; is such employment undertaken with the approval of the General Commanding in Chief or of the authorities in India; if not, whether any Despatch or Memorandum, censuring or prohibiting such a practice, has been issued to the service in India by the Secretary of State, or the Viceroy of India, or the General Commanding in Chief there; and whether any regulations of newspaper correspondents in the field were "provisionally sanctioned," or formally adopted by the Secretary of State, or transmitted by him to the Viceroy of India or the General Commanding in Chief there; if so, whether they have since been recalled or cancelled, and by whom?

MR. E. STANHOPE: Sir, certain officers of the Staff have, in the recent Afghan wars, acted as war correspondents of newspapers; and in certain cases last year, as the House is already aware, they undertook that employment with the knowledge of the General Commanding. I cannot, of course, say positively whether any officers are now so acting; but a general official Order was issued last year by the Adjutant General, under the direction of the Commander-in-Chief in India, prohibiting Staff officers from undertaking such employment. No regulations as to newspaper correspondents in the field have been provisionally sanctioned, or formally adopted, by the Secretary of State.

SIR CHARLES W. DILKE inquired whether the hon. Gentleman could give the date of the Order in question?

MR. E. STANHOPE: I am afraid I cannot. I do not think we have got it at the India Office; but I think we can get it at the War Office.

LORD CLERK REGISTER (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1879.

MR. FRASER MACKINTOSH asked the Lord Advocate, Whether Minutes and Regulations as contemplated by the 11th section of The Lord Clerk Register (Scotland) Act of 1879 have been made; and, if not, when they will be prepared and laid before Parliament?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. WATSON): Sir, I have some difficulty in understanding the purport of the Question of my hon. Friend. I do not exactly know what are the Minutes and Regulations contemplated by the section. That section simply provides that when it becomes necessary to make regulations they shall be laid on the Table of the House within a month after completion. I may inform my hon. Friend that certain regulations as to admission, and other matters connected with the internal administration of the Office, are at present in course of preparation. The delay has been in a considerable measure owing to the indisposition of the head of one of the largest departments in the Register House. I hope before long to be able to submit them to the House.

INDIA—THE WYNAAD GOLD FIELDS.

MR. PULESTON asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether he can confirm the report in the "Times" newspaper as to the extent and character of the gold fields of Southern India; and, whether he has received and can lay upon the Table of the House the Report of the Engineer of the Indian Government on the subject?

MR. E. STANHOPE: Sir, we have received unofficially a Report which confirms generally the statement referred to by my hon. Friend. I shall be very glad to show it to him; and after conferring with my hon. Friend, I have no doubt we shall be able to lay on the Table some part of the Report.

RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND)—NENAGH.

MR. O'DONNELL asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Whether he is aware that Major Percy, the stipendiary magistrate at Nenagh, has, as the result of a house to house visitation, reported in the following terms upon the condition of 519 distressed families in that district:—

> "They have no food of any kind; they have no fuel; their beds, bed-clothes, and everything movable has been long since sent to the pawn office; the homes, wretched in the extreme, are cold; the floors a mass of wet clay; in the corners of hundreds of rooms are straw heaps, kept together by large stones on the wet ground, an old sack or two the only covering. I never in a civilised land, nor indeed in any country, and I have been all over the world, saw such a picture of squalid misery;"

and, if he can inform the House why relief was not afforded earlier to this miserable population, and what measures have since been adopted to meet such distress?

MR. J. LOWTHER: Sir, I cannot find that Major Percy, the stipendiary magistrate at Nenagh, has made an official Report to the Irish Government on the distress prevailing in that district. If he had made such a Report as the hon. Gentleman described, it would have been in their possession. The hon. Member asks me why relief had not been afforded earlier, and what measures had since been adopted to meet the distress. I find that the Union including this district was gazetted on the 27th January among those scheduled as taking advantage of the notice issued by the Board of Works on the 12th of January. The Guardians have also been informed that out-door relief may be given under the new conditions, and sanitary and other works are contemplated, which will afford employment to the population. I also understand that the landlords of the Union have applied for advances to the amount of £3,500. I am not aware that the Government have power to do anything more.

MR. O'DONNELL: May I ask when the works in contemplation are likely to be commenced?

MR. J. LOWTHER: Applications, as I have stated, have been made for advances; but I cannot say how soon they will be in operation. One undertaking, by the sanitary authorities, for £4,500, I understand, is not likely to be proceeded with.

CRIME (IRELAND) — ATTACK ON TENANT RIGHT MEETING AT PORTADOWN.

MR. O'DONNELL asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, If his attention has been drawn to the reports that, on Wednesday last, a public meeting to advocate Tenant Right in the neighbourhood of Portadown was attacked by a large body of persons armed with bludgeons and other weapons and headed by a band of fifes and drums playing Orange party tunes; whether it is true that a notice or proclamation had been previously published denouncing the proposed Tenant Right meeting as disloyal and seditious, and summoning the adversaries of Tenant Right to attend and oppose it; whether it is true that many of the advocates of Tenant Right present were severely struck and beaten and the meeting violently broken up; and, whether he can inform the House why the authorities took no precautions for the defence of a number of people engaged in holding a public meeting?

MR. J. LOWTHER: Sir, the circumstances referred to by the hon. Gentleman only took place about 48 hours ago, and I have been unable as yet to receive a report on the subject. Inquiry is being instituted into the subject.

MERCHANT SHIPS — THE "LOUISA FLETCHER" OF LIVERPOOL (UNSEAWORTHINESS).

MR. BURT (for Mr. PLIMSOLL) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the fact that on Wednesday last the magistrates at Stonehouse committed thirteen men (being the crew of the "Louisa Fletcher") to jail for fourteen days for refusing to go to sea in her, although four Board of Trade Surveyors declared her to be unseaworthy, and the bench is bound by Statute to be guided by their opinion; and, if so, whether he will order the immediate release of the men; and, further, if his attention has been called to the statement that the Falmouth magistrates have sent six men to jail, under similar circumstances, without having before them a Board of Trade Surveyor, although there was one in the town and the men were earnest in their request that he might survey the ship?

Mr. ASSHETON CROSS: Sir, Notice of this Question was only given by the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) last night, and it has been impossible for me to communicate with the magistrates of Falmouth and Stonehouse, so as to receive an answer before 4 o'clock to-day. I have communicated with the magistrates of both places, and a further inquiry will be made. In regard to the first case, the Question is hardly fair to the magistrates. In the first place, the men were not sent to prison immediately, but were fined 15*s.* each, and sent to gaol in default. But I have seen a letter from the gentleman—a clergyman, I believe—who took up the case, and employed a lawyer to defend the men, in which he states that at the first commencement of the case he thought the men had been hardly used; but in the course of the trial his opinion entirely changed, and he thought the men were in the wrong. All I can say at the present moment is that I have communicated with the magistrates in regard to both cases, and the question will be carefully considered.

TURKEY—MURDER OF MR. OGLE.

Mr. E. JENKINS asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether the Mr. Consul Blunt, instructed by Mr. Layard, in a Despatch printed in Paper Turkey, No. 34, 1878, p. 15, to hold an inquiry into the circumstances of the murder of Mr. Ogle, is the same Mr. Blunt before whom all the depositions (which are printed on pp. 44—58 same Paper) purport to have been taken; and, whether he is the same Mr. Blunt who has recently reported in favour of a delay in the inquiry promised by the Government so long ago?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER, in reply, said, that it would be more convenient that Questions relating to details of foreign affairs should be addressed to the Representative of the Foreign Office. It was true that Mr. Blunt was sent in the first instance by Sir Henry Layard to take part in the judicial inquiry at Volo, and till his departure on a mission of mediation to the insurgent Chiefs he took part in the examination of witnesses along with Redschid Pacha. The inquiry was continued by Consul General Fawcett; but Consul Blunt, from his intimate knowledge of the country, was considered best qualified to take part in such an inquiry.

CHANNEL ISLANDS—JERSEY—PAYMENT OF THE JUDGE.

Mr. WADDY asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, in view of the present vacancy in the office of judge or bailiff in Jersey, the Government will provide that in future the judge shall receive a fixed salary instead of being paid by fees?

Mr. ASSHETON CROSS, in reply, said, he doubted whether he had the power to carry out the suggestion of the hon. and learned Gentleman. He should be glad to exercise the power; but he feared he did not possess it.

LAW AND JUSTICE—INSTRUCTION OF THE POLICE IN AMBULANCE DRILL.

Mr. ELLIOT asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If it is correct that the City Police, and the County Police of most of the Home Counties, are being instructed in ambulance drill and "first aid to the injured," and that the drill of the Metropolitan Police in such matters has been discontinued; and, if so, what is the reason of such discontinuance. Is it owing to expense?

Mr. ASSHETON CROSS, in reply, said, he understood instruction was not discontinued, though a change had been made in the mode of giving it. Last year it was undertaken by the divisional surgeons, and it was still given, though by different persons.

MOTION.

ORDERS OF THE DAY—STANDING ORDER OF SUPPLY AND WAYS AND MEANS.—RESOLUTION.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER, in rising to move—

> "That the Standing Order relative to Supply or Ways and Means standing the first Order of the Day on Friday be read, and suspended.
>
> "That the Committee of Supply be deferred until after the Order of the Day for resuming the Adjourned Debate on Business of the House (Order in Debate),"

said, he was aware that this would be an unusual course; but it was not absolutely unprecedented. The step had been taken on one occasion at least, and it was obviously one which the House had it in its power to take. He was anxious to appeal to the House to agree to this course, because they had reached a period of the Session when it was very important that they should make progress with certain portions of their Business, which had to be got through by a particular date. There was a good deal of Business which it was essentially necessary to get through before Easter. They had spent much time —though he would not say it had not been well spent—in the discussion of a measure of great urgency and importance, and had now arrived at the close of February. It was really important, therefore, that they should not lose any time in making progress with their work, and he was strongly impressed with the necessity of concluding the debate before the close of this week. He should be sorry to propose a Sitting on Saturday; but, if necessary, he should not shrink from making even that proposal. He hoped, however, that, if his proposal were acceded to, the Business in hand would be completed within a comparatively short time. The discussion of the previous day was of a character which induced him to think that they were tolerably well agreed about the necessity for the Resolution which he had proposed. The questions of detail which still remained to be settled were not such as necessarily to give rise to a very lengthened debate. He trusted, therefore, that the whole of the Amendments would be got through in a very few hours. The Notice, on going into Committee of Supply, of the hon. Member for Waterford (Mr. R. Power), which now stood first on the Paper, was, no doubt, one which excited a good deal of interest among the Irish Members. The hon. Member, however, originally stood no chance of being able to proceed with his Motion so as to have a division upon it, because the hon. Member for Chester (Mr. Raikes) stood before him with a Motion on which he intended to ask for a division. The hon. Member for Chester, however, had taken his Notice off the Paper that day, so that the Notice of the hon. Member for Waterford now held the first place on the Paper. If the Resolution relating to Obstruction were discussed at a moderate length, it would not take up more time than would have been taken up by the discussion on the Motion of the hon. Member for Chester. The hon. Member for Waterford, therefore, if he consented to postpone his Notice, would have as early an opportunity of bringing his Motion forward as he would have had supposing the Notice of the hon. Member for Chester had not been withdrawn. He hoped the hon. Member for Waterford would consider these circumstances; but he did not, of course, know whether he had been successful in inducing him to see how advantageous a position had been secured for him. He trusted the House would agree to the course which he proposed should be taken, and allow the Order for going into Committee of Ways and Means to be suspended in order that the debate on the Amendment to his Resolution might be proceeded with.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON said, he was sorry the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not followed the usual and desirable course. There were many occasions upon which it became necessary to call upon private Members to surrender the position which they had secured on the Notice Paper in order that Business of a very urgent nature might be considered; but, as far as he could recollect, it had always been the practice, when such a sacrifice was called for, to make an appeal to hon. Members who had Motions on the Paper. [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: I did that.] Then there must be some misapprehension. He understood that, after the adjournment of the Debate was moved, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that it would be desirable that the debate should be resumed to-day, and that, therefore, he would move the suspension of the Standing Orders. The hon. Member for Waterford then rose, and said that he understood the right hon. Gentleman to make an appeal to him; and he (the Marquess of Hartington) understood the right hon. Gentleman to reply, "I make no appeal." In the present case there were very strong reasons why such an appeal should have been made; and he thought it was very unfortunate that a precedent should be established putting it in the power of a Government to move the suspension of the Standing Orders whenever they might have pressing Business of their own. The question relating to the Privileges of the House was one which, of course, affected the interests of the whole country, and hon. Members would naturally be disposed to second any appeal which might be made to them by the Leader of the House on such a subject. He trusted, however, that if the appeal now made were agreed to it would not be regarded as a precedent for the purpose of forwarding the ordinary Business of the Government. He regretted that there should be any misapprehension as to the fact of an appeal having been made to hon. Members by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the previous evening; and he was glad to be able to afford the right hon. Gentleman an opportunity of explaining how the matter stood.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he was sorry there should have been any misunderstanding. When he said last night that they were obliged to adjourn the debate he was anxious that it should be resumed the next evening; and he appealed to his hon. Friend the Member for Chester (Mr. Raikes), not publicly, but repeatedly in private, to give way and allow the debate to proceed. His hon. Friend declined several times to give way, and as his consent was that which was absolutely necessary, he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) had no other course but to move the Amendment to suspend the Standing Orders. That would override the scruples, and overcome the coyness, of his hon. Friend, and, under these circumstances, he did not think it necessary to make an appeal to the hon. Member opposite (Mr. R. Power), because he stood in a position that rendered it rather advantageous to him to give way.

MR. R. POWER: Sir, I am sorry to say that I do not see the advantages of the position in which the right hon. Gentleman says he has placed me. I should have been very happy to have witnessed the interview between the right hon. Gentleman and the hon. Member for Chester; but I may remind the House that the hon. and learned Member for Louth (Mr. Sullivan) made an appeal to you, Sir, on the previous evening, whether the hon. Member for Chester had a right to move his Resolution at all; and it is still a doubtful matter whether he has a right to do so. However, Sir, as regards this question of appeal, I was rather surprised, last night, when the right hon. Gentleman refused to make an appeal to me. I took it for granted he would have done so, and at that hour of the night, when we were under more pleasant circumstances than at present, there is no knowing what might have happened. But the right hon. Gentleman having declared that he would not make an appeal to me, I came down here to-day determined not to yield to him. I am not sure, however, that the right hon. Gentleman was not right in not making this appeal; for, in this matter of appeals, there ought to be some reciprocity. Hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House have made several appeals to the Treasury Bench, and I am not aware that any of these were acceded to. But what I object to in the conduct of the right hon. Gentleman is that he proposes, without precedent, to take from private Members a day in the very first month of the Session. Now, Sir, is there any great hurry about these Resolutions? I do not think there is, and I do not believe the Government think there is. The right hon. Gentleman himself has declared that there has been no obstruction this Session; and then, with a curious description of logic, brings forward these Resolutions. I have never thrown any obstacle willingly in the way of Public Business, and I shall be happy to give way on certain conditions. ["Hear, hear!"] The hon. Member has, I am afraid, cheered a little too soon. He had better wait and see what the conditions are. One is that the Government should grant the Committee I ask for. That would be the shortest and quickest way to dispose of it. The other is that they should give me a day for the discussion of my Motion. I am not so unreasonable as to ask for a day before Easter. We know very well that every day is engaged up to Easter; but between this and Easter many things may happen—accidents will happen in the best regulated Governments—and if the right hon. Gentleman will promise to give me a day after Easter, and if the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition will give a similar undertaking, I shall be prepared to withdraw my Motion. I do, however, object to this infringement on the rights of private Members. What appears to me to be particularly hard is this. I came over on the first day of the Session to ballot for this day. Irish Members have a great deal of trouble and inconvenience in coming over to England. It is all very well for English Members who can come up from the country and go back the same night. But the Irish have a bit of water to cross that they call the mill pond, or the duck pond, and that is sometimes a great obstructive; indeed, so much so, that Irish Members very often reach London more dead than alive, and are really of no use for two or three days. Now, I particularly object that they should punish me for this. I have never been an obstructive, and probably that is the reason they punish me. Their policy is only in keeping with the fumbling and stumbling policy as to obstruction. Personally, I do not care whether you pass this Rule or not. I can tell you that you will never suspend me by these Rules, or by any other means. My own opinion is that they are the most milk-and-water arrangements ever proposed, and that one determined to obstruct would have no difficulty in driving a coach-and-six through them. I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to give me a day after Easter for the discussion of my Motion; and I think that is not an unreasonable request, considering the importance of my Motion and the utter insignificance of his.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, the hon. Gentleman, no doubt, anticipated the answer which he felt it to be his duty to give to the suggestion that the Government should agree to his Motion—that he could not undertake to do so, nor could he promise to find a day for its discussion before Easter. The hon. Gentleman would, he thought, do well to try the ordinary means to procure a day for the purpose; and if he were not successful, he should be glad to see what could be done to meet his convenience later on in the Session.

MR. O'DONNELL was glad to say any expectations which had been formed by Her Majesty's Government that they had strengthened their position in view of the coming Elections by these Resolutions were nullified by the ingenious spirit displayed by the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition, who last evening came forward and expressed himself more anti-obstructive than the Treasury Bench itself. As a specimen of the amiable consistency with which they were treated, he would refer to what had happened that morning. *The Standard* had officially announced in its editorial columns that—

> "In consequence of the receipt of a telegram from Mr. Parnell, Mr. Biggar had resolved to disregard the expressed wish of the moderate section of the Home Rule Party and to oppose the utmost resistance in detail to the Resolutions on obstruction."

That had been palmed off in some mysterious way on the editor of *The Standard.* Seeing the manner in which that respectable Ministerial journal had inserted such a calumny, he believed it must have been received from a very high authority indeed, and he should like to know what that authority was. The noble Lord the Postmaster General had, he might add, on the previous evening warned the House that the temper within its walls was nothing to that which existed out-of-doors with regard to obstruction; but he would show the House how the exasperation of the country, if it did really exist, was manufactured. *The Globe* newspaper, speaking of his own action, said that he had a few dozen Amendments to the Resolutions of the Government to propose on his own account; but that was an absolute falsehood, for there were in all only six or seven Notices of Amendments set down in his name, two of which were verbal Amendments, and the others being practically alternative Amendments of a substantial character. Yet he was held up by a Ministerial journal as an Obstructionist. In spite of the patriotic attitude of the Leaders of the Opposition——

MR. SPEAKER pointed out that the hon. Member was not in Order in discussing these matters on a Motion relating to the Order of Business.

MR. O'DONNELL accepted, of course, the Speaker's ruling. He did not, however, intend to refer to any matter outside the subject under discussion, and his object merely was to show that the Government had no claim to courtesy from that side of the House. He might add, in conclusion, that the subject which he had put upon the Paper that evening was of the most urgent character, and that he could not in these circumstances assent to the Motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If, however, he was allowed to bring on his Motion he was willing to promise not to occupy more than seven minutes in doing so.

CAPTAIN PIM, who had also a Notice on the Paper, said, he should not oppose the Motion; but he gave way without making any conditions, in order to heap coals of fire on the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

MR. BIGGAR considered that the reasons given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer for his Motion came with a bad grace from him. It was notorious that up to the present time the Government had wasted three nights of the Session with purely electioneering business. They had occupied a large amount of time in debating a question which was a perfect truism; and after doing so he did not see how they could ask to set aside a Motion of the greatest importance such as that relating to absenteeism in Ireland.

MR. DODSON regretted that the Government had not appealed in the usual way to hon. Members having Notices on the Paper to allow the discussion on the Business of the House to continue tonight. He trusted that the House would, without any further parley, come to a decision on the question.

MR. SHAW hoped that the House would decide without a division, and that the Motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be allowed to pass. He did not think the right course had been adopted; but he was quite sure it had been inadvertent. He was sure that the right hon. Gentleman had not deliberately cast a slight upon anyone, and he hoped that the hon. Member for Waterford would not go to a division.

MAJOR O'GORMAN said, the conduct of the hon. Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell) had been ruled by the Speaker to be irregular. He wished to ask if any Member, when the House was not in Committee, had the privilege of speaking three times on the same subject as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had done?

MR. R. POWER expressed his willingness to withdraw his Motion on the understanding given him by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Motion *agreed to.*

Standing Order relative to Supply or Ways and Means standing the first Order of the Day on Friday read, and suspended.

Mr. O'Donnell

Ordered, That the Committee of Supply be deferred until after the Order of the Day for resuming the Adjourned Debate on Business of the House (Order in Debate).—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

ORDER OF THE DAY.

PARLIAMENT — BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (ORDER IN DEBATE)—RESOLUTION.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [SECOND NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [26th February].—See page 1463.]

And which Amendment was,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "during a Debate, whether in the House or in Committee, any Member may draw the attention of the Chair to misconduct on the part of a Member who in addressing the House may persistently endeavour to prevent the Progress of Business, by rising in his place and taking Notice that the Member for   is wilfully obstructing the Business of this House.

"Whereupon (unless in the judgment of the Chair the interruption is frivolous and unfounded, in which case he shall call on the Member in possession of the House to proceed), Mr. Speaker (or the Chairman) shall forthwith put the Question 'That   be not further heard,' which Question shall be decided without amendment or debate, but the Motion shall not be carried by a majority of less than two-thirds if a Division is called.

"Any Member so put to silence shall stand suspended from the service of the House for one week.

"Any Member put to silence twice in the same Session shall stand suspended from the service of the House for one calendar month, and for such further period until he shall have submitted himself to the House and given assurance that he will not so offend again,"—(*Mr. Sampson Lloyd,*)

—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the word 'whenever' stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed.*

MR. SHAW said, he did not intend to occupy the House at any great length; but he wished to say something on the general question. He could not object, speaking generally, to the Resolutions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for he thought them preferable to the other Resolutions on the Paper. If anything were done he would rather have authority placed in the hands of the Speaker instead of the matter being left to the indiscriminate action of the House. A Speaker's decisions were almost always unchallengeable, and never had they been more so than in the case of the present occupant of the Chair, in whose hands every hon. Gentleman would feel himself perfectly safe. He thought it would be invidious to call on the House to vote upon the ruling of the Speaker; and he should not like such a decision to be left to the few who were in the House when the offence was committed, or to the many who might be called in by the ringing of the bell, and who would know nothing of what had taken place. He was, therefore, strongly in favour of leaving the whole matter in the hands of the Speaker. But the second part of the Resolution relating to the Chairman of Committees required much more consideration. He had not a word to say against the hon. Gentleman who held that position at present, and who discharged his duties with great ability and impartiality. But the Chairman of Committees was generally regarded as part of the machinery of the Government—he was a Party man, and voted on Party questions; and it was, therefore, undesirable to place in his hands the question of suspending a Member of the House. Moreover, in some protracted Sittings there was a succession of Chairmen, and a matter of such importance as the suspension of a Member ought not to be intrusted to a temporary Chairman. As to the degree of punishment in the Resolution, he thought that if any Member should commit the offence three times in one Session the punishment proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not at all too severe. He did not see any object in making a change in the proposal before the House, because he hoped that if this Rule were passed the Speaker would very seldom or never have to act under it. The highest and best feeling of every Member of that House would rise up in every case and aid the Speaker in the discharge of his duty. If it were found that a Member offended three times, he should consider him such an unmitigated fool that the amount of punishment would be of little consequence. It would be impossible to cure such an offender by increasing the punishment. For his own part, he deemed it an honour to have a seat in that House; he had never done anything to interfere with the Business, and he should give his aid to Her Majesty's Government and to the Speaker, as presiding over that Assembly, in maintaining the dignity and facilitating the conduct of the Business of the House. He did not understand how any men could deliberately think that by persistent Obstruction they could do any good to themselves or to any cause they had at heart. It had been said, he believed, that the House would in time be so disgusted by persistent obstruction that it would do something which certain hon. Gentlemen very much desired. The thing was perfectly absurd. He had seen the idea stated in Irish newspapers, and had treated it as childish nonsense. The matter was, in fact, beyond the pale of reasoning altogether. If any man was so absurd in his ideas of public life as to think that, a year or two in that House would cure him. Another view had also been lately taken. It had been stated that after the next General Election the Home Rulers would come into the House in such strength of numbers that they would make an alliance with the Liberal Party and force them to carry out their views. That had been stated, he thought, from the other side of the House; it had certainly been stated in newspapers which were the organs of the other side of the House. Nothing could be more absurd and childish. If such a course were possible nothing could be more discreditable and dishonourable to the Members of the Liberal Party. But there was nothing in the history of the Party to justify the insulting aspersion that, for the sake of the paltry pay and the honour of sitting for a few years on the Treasury Bench, its holders would deliberately give up their principles, and carry out a policy which they disapproved. If that was the hope of the Home Rulers they would be miserably disappointed. He believed that there were two ways by which a nation might gain its ends—one was by fighting, if it were able to fight; the other was by constitutional, rational, intelligent agitation. The only hope the Home Rulers had of gaining their ends was by bringing the public opinion of this country into the groove in which they wished it to run. He trusted the objects sought for would be so presented that the English people would come to see their fairness and their justice. He would not sit there a moment if he did not think that in course of time the Home Rule Party could accomplish their ends. Those ends, he believed, were fairly within the possibilities of constitutional political action, and entirely within the bounds of political agitation. He had the fullest and most complete faith in the ultimate decision of the English people, although they sometimes had fits of insanity, as all strong people and animals did when they got too fat. But they came to their senses at last, and no people in the world were more capable of judging fairly and acting rightly. It was only by constitutional action and by bringing public opinion round to their views that he would for a moment think of seeking the ends which the Home Rule Party had at heart. Here he would take the liberty of making one or two suggestions. One was that the Government should endeavour to introduce measures suitable to the different sections of the Empire. Ireland was far behind England in social and political advancement. Legislation was required in reference to a number of questions which it would be absurd to legislate about in England. The English people were in an independent position, and they could not at all understand the position of the people of Ireland or those who pleaded for them. He would entreat hon. Gentlemen to look carefully at those great questions which were the foundation of national prosperity. Self-dependence in England had made everything. Let it be fostered and cherished in Ireland, and let the people be helped to obtain the same results. Were the Government doing this? Nothing of the kind. Were they endeavouring to foster a good spirit between the two peoples? He would only refer to a speech recently delivered in the North by a right hon. Gentleman who was a Member of the present Government, and who said bands of marauders went about at night in Ireland inflicting all kinds of injuries on unoffending men. Was that true? Was there any such thing in Munster, Ulster, or Leinster? There might have been a few cases in Connaught; but it was wrong to compare the Ireland of to-day in that respect with the Ireland of 40 or 50 years ago; and it was most extraordinary that a Gentleman occupying such a position, taking the money of the State to do the work of the State, should have made a speech to leave on the minds of his hearers an impression that that was the condition of the whole country. The right hon. Gentleman went on to ask how people could wonder at the gentlemen of Ireland being absentees, when, if they went to their estates, the first thing they received was a missive with a drawing of a death's head and cross bones.

Mr. NEWDEGATE rose to a point of Order. He wished to know whether the observations of the hon. Member for Cork with reference to the state of Ireland were pertinent to the question of the re-organization of the discipline of the House, which was now before the House?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Cork is making some general observations with regard to the development of Ireland. I did not interpose; but I am bound to say that those observations do not appear to me to be closely relevant to the Question before the House.

Mr. SHAW said, he would not persevere in that line of remark. They were now considering the Business of the House, and he thought it would be a very wise thing for the House to regard the question in rather a broader view than that of making a change in the powers of the right hon. Gentleman who presided over their deliberations. Would it not be worth while for the Government and the Leaders of the House to link themselves together in order to place on a solid foundation the Business for consideration? Did anyone imagine that the House could do the business of the three countries? Was it not the pressure of Business that caused the unpleasantness there had been on both sides of the House? Such a mass of Business, extending over the whole Empire, was brought forward that it was physically impossible to get through it. Would it not be wiser, instead of trying to suppress and repress, to endeavour to lay down some new lines for the conduct of the Business of the House? He was entirely in favour of the suggestion that they should have Grand Committees of the House; and if some Bills affecting Ireland, such as had, even that Session, occupied night after night, had been submitted to a proper Grand Committee, they would have occupied hardly any of the time of the House, and would have been passed in a much more business-like form than they had been. Business and common sense would then have found their proper place, and everything like nonsense would have disappeared. Business would then come down to the House in a shape capable of being discussed. He hoped Government would look at this fully, and endeavour to make some arrangements for facilitating the Business of the House. The question was, what was the meaning of the Resolution? He did not want to occupy time in going over the debate; but it had been said it had been of an electioneering character. He was rather afraid it was. He was not disposed to put the worst construction on human nature; but, looking at the whole case, it must be acknowledged to have something of an electioneering character. His hon. and learned Friend the Member for Louth (Mr. Sullivan) said that the Government were coerced by public opinion on this subject. He did not believe there was any great mass of public opinion on it. The newspapers, it was true, were writing in a very unfortunate style on this subject. But how was that public opinion originated? The first note of it was struck by the Prime Minister when he made the extraordinary declaration that those who were in favour of Home Rule were traitors to their country and their Sovereign. Of course, it was the merest piece of buncombe done in the highest style of art. There was nothing he more regretted himself than not having heard it, because he remembered many of those things, and he remembered the style in which they were done at the Table in front of the Speaker. That was followed by a lot of writing in the newspapers in London; but there was no public opinion in England generally against Home Rule. There was a public opinion in England just as much as in Ireland against persistent and senseless obstruction; but there was no public opinion against Home Rule within the lines of the Constitution. The hon. and learned Member for Louth, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition went back a few years for the origin of this obstruction, and he (Mr. Shaw) would follow their example. One of the most extraordinary pieces of obstruction, and conducted in a most scientific manner, was recorded in the *Life of Lord George Bentinck*, and it was performed in the House of Commons in 1846 or 1847. The Irish Coercion Bill was run against the Corn Laws. It was done in the most scientific way possible; but then it was done by the noble Lord the Prime Minister, so it could not have any harm it. But, in fact, there was hardly a period in which obstruction had not been the imperative duty of the minority of the House of Commons. As for the writings in the newspapers, and this attempt to get up a spirit of hatred between England and Ireland, it was one of the things above all others to be reprobated. It was one that might lead to results that no man in his senses could look forward to without fear and trembling. Was it nothing that two peoples who must live side by side and with sympathies in common should have good feelings towards each other? Was it nothing that for mere political purposes, for certain temporary objects, there should be an attempt to create a feeling against a certain class, and that the worst passions of Party should be fanned into a flame? It was one of the most deplorable things that could occur. They might talk about agitations in Ireland in which England was denounced; he acknowledged that there was something of the sort. He deplored it; but was that a reason why men in high position in England should indulge in that kind of speaking and writing to which he had referred? He trusted that when this Resolution was passed the thing might come to an end. But was it the intention to prevent the full and free discussion of any measure that might be brought forward? The professed intention was, of course, to put down deliberate and senseless obstruction. He was surprised to read a published statement by a noble Lord on the Treasury Bench that obstruction was almost an hourly occurrence. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the contrary, had said that there was nothing of the kind this Session. At any rate, he hoped there would be no attempt to prevent Members from discussing any Bill they objected to. Such a course, he believed, would bring disaster to the Empire. If they—the Irish Members—found that they could not get fair play, that they were voted down, and crushed down, their duty would be plain. It would be, as a body to leave the House; and he, for one, would not hesitate for a moment to take the responsibility of advising that course. They would leave this House, and say to their constituents that they could get no justice here, no consideration, nothing but force; that they might do some good at home, but none in the House of Commons. He had no doubt that better feelings and principles would gain the mastery, and he was sure that those who were responsible for the conduct of Public Business would not attempt to repress an honest and free discussion. Men of little sense and narrow minds might try to draw the Leaders to a different course of action; but he was sure that the right hon. Gentleman who led that House would always beat down such interference, and that in the future, as to a great extent in the past, they would have the fullest liberty to express their opinions.

Mr. GLADSTONE: Sir, I cannot but think that Members of this House in general must have listened to the speech of my hon. Friend who has just sat down, although he may have departed in some degree from the literal and technical forms of discussion, with strong emotions of sympathy and respect. I, of course, am not of the opinion professed by my hon. Friend upon the important question to which he refers; but I must say that the spirit of thorough manliness in which he approaches this question, and which he unites with a spirit of thorough kindliness to us, and with an evident disposition to respect both the functions of this House and the spirit of the English Constitution, does give hope that if the relations between England and Ireland are to become thoroughly satisfactory the most important contribution to that essential end will have been made by my hon. Friend and those who speak like him. I do not think it right to allow this subject to pass with only a silent vote on my part; because, although I am not in a position to make any important contribution to the materials of judgment possessed by the House, yet, considering the novelty of the subject—the strangeness of the subject, combined with its importance—it is, perhaps, right that one who has passed, I think, more hours within the walls of this House than anyone who now sits within it, should not evade the responsibility of taking his part either in approbation or in objection to the course adopted by the Government. In the first place, I thoroughly concur with my noble Friend the Leader of the Opposition as to the deference due to the Government in a matter of this kind, not only because of their general responsibility—exceeding that of all others—for the good conduct of the Business of the House, but likewise because they have, after all, a more thorough and continuous knowledge of what has taken place, and of the amount of necessity for action that can possibly belong to any of us who are private and independent Members. I myself am bound to say that, not being as good an attendant of this House as I have been in earlier years, I have, perhaps, less original knowledge of the necessity of the proposal than a great many of those who are at this moment listening to me. But I am not wanting in disposition to refer to those who have greater opportunities of knowledge; and it appears to me the presumption is that a case has arisen in which it is desirable for this House to take some measure in the direction indicated by the proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I must further say that if deference is due to the Government officially in regard to the proposal that they now make, I think their claim is very much strengthened by the tone and spirit of the speeches that have been made from the Ministerial Bench. I heard the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the speech of the Postmaster General last night; and if, as has been said by my hon. Friend who spoke last, there has been anything in the mind of anyone of an electioneering spirit in connection with the production of these Resolutions, it must be, I think, in candour admitted that there was not the slightest trace of that spirit in either of those speeches. And I go further, and say this—that it is quite evident, if the Government had chosen to make a proposition of a more stringent character, they would, though, perhaps, at a greater expenditure of time, have been able probably to carry it through the House. I think the Postmaster General laid down a just and true principle, when he indicated that it was not the duty of the Government in a matter of this kind to excite feeling, but rather to temper and restrain it; and that, on the whole, the safe course for them to take is, if there must be error, to err on the side of leniency rather than on the opposite side. In truth, it appears to me that the great importance of a Resolution of this kind, after all, does not, perhaps, lie exclusively or mainly in the particular condition it embodies; but it lies in this—that it is a strong indication of the sense and determination of the House to perform its duty and maintain its dignity; and it is a pledge given by the House to the country that whatever measure it may find in the course of its experience to be necessary for those ends it will fearlessly adopt. With regard to the particulars of these Resolutions, I, following my noble Friend the Leader of the Opposition, will say at least as much as he said. I have no intention of making any proposal in opposition to what may be the ultimate and well-considered view of the Government. The first point on which I will say one word is a point that I have not yet heard introduced by either of those Cabinet Ministers who have addressed the House. It is sufficiently exhibited by the two words "or otherwise" in the fifth line of the Resolution; and I must seek for an explanation of those words, or of the necessity for any words of that description. As far as I understand the matter, we are not here engaged in discussing the general weakness or insufficiency of the Rules of the House; but we are discussing a particular evil which it is thought necessary to meet by some special measure. That evil has been carefully defined in the Resolution by the words "persistently and wilfully obstructing the Business of the House;" but the Resolution goes beyond the persistent and wilful obstruction of the Business, and states that, apart from any such thing as persistent and wilful obstruction of the House, if there shall have been by any Member an abuse of the Rules of the House, then the penalties contemplated by the Resolution shall come into force. I own, at the present time, in the absence of explanations on this subject, that evidently the dictate of prudence and common sense is, while adopting means sufficient for our needs, to confine ourselves strictly to business connected with the end we have in view, and not to attempt to constitute a new Order, and still less to call into existence an Order giving a new and undefined power for classes of offences upon which we have not said a word, and for which, so far as I know, there is not the smallest reason to believe that they have existed, or, at all events, that they have existed in any degree greater than has been borne in other times or in our own time with any intolerable inconvenience. I hope that that observation will be felt not in any manner to touch the vital portion of this measure and the object which Her Majesty's Government have in view, and I have no doubt that it will receive your careful consideration. Next to that I come to the term that "such Member shall be suspended from the service of the House," and I do hope that there will be such thought given to the question whether it is worth the while of the House to extend the penalty to the voting of the inculpated Member. I do not now speak in the slightest degree in the interest of the Member who has offended. If it is a question of the amount of his offence, and the insufficiency of the punishment inflicted, I would give him a larger punishment if necessary—but I am reluctant to punish constituencies. Now, there are many cases in the House in which this obstruction might occur in which the constituents might have a very strong and special interest, and where they might suffer seriously and severely from the disqualification of their Member from voting. On the other hand, it is obvious that the voting of a Member does not obstruct the House. It does not delay its proceedings. I speak in ignorance of the considerations which may have governed the Administration in making this proposal; but I am at present so strongly under the distinct impression that the disability of voting is in so large a degree a punishment inflicted upon the constituency for the offence of the Member, that constituency not being in the view of the House guilty in any degree of sharing the offence of the Member or responsible for it, that I hope the subject may receive the careful consideration of the Government. I presume that, as the words now stand, the words "suspended from the service of the House" include what I may call corporal expulsion from the walls of the House, because the Member who is present, even without speaking, yet votes upon all those questions which are carried without a division. I conclude there is no doubt of the meaning of those words; but I may say that it is very desirable that any words which may be used should be perfectly clear and unambiguous, and that if is the intention of the House to have this corporal expulsion it should be plainly and distinctly expressed in the Resolution. Then we come to the very serious and very difficult question with regard to supporting, or appearing to support, the judgment of the Speaker by the votes of the House. I own that I share the opinion that has been given by my noble Friend the Leader of the Opposition, by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt), and especially, I may say, by my hon. Friend who has just sat down, that the judgment should proceed from the Chairman, and that both the House and the Speaker would be placed in something of a false position by the preference of the House itself. In such an event there might be some risk of a trial of the Speaker. But my hon. Friend who has just sat down was the first person who has unfolded a little the difficult question which I dare say Her Majesty's Government felt in regard to the Chairman of Committees. But it is not only the official Chairman of Committees that we have also to consider; we have also to keep in view the casual and temporary Chairman of Committees. It is possible that this consideration and the necessity of some confirmatory vote may have an influence in determining Her Majesty's Government in the course they may take; and I thoroughly agree with my hon. Friend who spoke last that there is a much greater difficulty in that portion of the case than in the portion of the case which concerns the Speaker in the Chair, and all I can say is that whatever may be the Resolution of Her Majesty's Government upon the subject I shall not venture to dissent from it by an adverse vote. There is one more question on which I think I may say a word, although I believe it is in the 2nd Resolution before the House. I do not see the advantage of constituting this new scheme at once a Standing Order. I do not see what is gained for it from the point of view of the Government. The whole thing is necessarily experimental. That is not the fault of the Government; but it is extremely difficult to tell beforehand—I am sure those who have considered the matter most will feel the truth of what I say—what will be the precise effect and operation of the different parts of the Resolution, if, which we all deprecate, it should become a practical measure. Why deprive yourselves of the benefit of experiment? You want to make a provision for the present Parliament; why are we to attempt, considering the extreme limitation of our own knowledge of the matter, and the great difficulty of forming confident forecasts in a matter so entirely new—why are we to deal with it conclusively? Why not leave the new Parliament, which will have to consider the subject, perfectly free and open for its consideration? I am entirely ignorant what advantage the Chancellor of the Exchequer would obtain from making this a Standing Order. Further consideration of the matter must be, and I ask that the further consideration should be, as free and unprejudiced as possible. I will not push further any of these remarks. I must give in my concurrence to what was said both by my noble Friend the Leader of the Opposition and by my hon. Friend who has just sat down as to the comparatively limited nature of the proposals we have before us, and, in fact, of the subject to which they relate. The disposition to obstruct wherever it exists—and do not let us conceal for ourselves that in its minor and more innocent forms of development it exists—very recently and very widely for temporary and special purposes perhaps; but the disposition to obstruct is mainly fostered by the difficulty of the position in which the House finds itself in consequence of the enormous mass of Business it has to do. Here lies, Sir, the root of the matter. I was reading only to-day in a newspaper an account given by the agent of that newspaper of an interview which he had been fortunate enough to obtain with Prince Bismarck, and, after having endeavoured to extract from the deep mind of the Prince all that he could with regard to foreign and Continental politics, the journalist proceeded to feel his pulse on the subject of English politics. The principal thing he was able to get out of Prince Bismarck—a man of few words, and all those words pithy and strong—was contained in these few terms "The English have too many irons in the fire." Now, it is the number of irons in the fire—it is the enormous mass of Business attached to the House as it now exists in its present functions—under the most favourable circumstances a mass of Business beyond the power of any Assembly to transact—that gives facility and temptation to obstruction, and that it is which calls for some effective measure if this is possible. Reference has been made to the practice abroad of what is termed the *clôture;* but let us observe and bear in mind that, whatever the *clôture* may be as a means of saving the time of a deliberative Assembly, it is, I think—and so I presume Her Majesty's Government have thought—inapplicable to the present discussion, because, as a penal measure, it would surely be altogether inappropriate. The *clôture* is not the stoppage of a particular Member who is supposed to have offended, it is the stoppage of the debate; and, therefore, to bring in the *clôture* for the purposes which this Resolution contemplates would be simply to enact that the House would punish itself, and the great interests with which it is charged, in consequence of the offence of a particular Member. I do not know whose happy lot it may be to see the day when there may be wisely devised and successfully carried through this House an important and effectual measure for the devolution of such portions of its powers as can be safely devolved, with a view to lightening the duties of the House. It is quite impossible that the House can discharge its duties effectually until some such measures can be devised and shall be carried out. Do not let it be supposed that if there be those who complain of the idleness of the House in general, or of this particular Parliament, that I am disposed to join in that complaint. Certainly, Sir, with respect to the present Parliament, it has been my misfortune to differ very largely and widely, indeed, from its proceedings; but this testimony I most readily bear—that I do not believe there has ever been a Parliament and an Administration more diligent in the discharge of its duties. It is, therefore, not from want of diligence that the difficulty has arisen. The main causes lie in the enormous functions that have really gone beyond what the human mind and strength, and the time allotted to us, can possibly discharge. I am very glad that my noble Friend (the Marquess of Hartington) and my hon. Friend (Mr. Shaw) have, by a few words, directed the attention of the House and the country to this subject. I am afraid there is out-of-doors, and in some portions of the Press—and I may almost say it has been visible in certain speeches delivered elsewhere—a disposition to magnify enormously, to exaggerate the question that we are now in immediate course of dealing with, and to propogate an idea that, provided we can only pass a good Resolution upon this subject, the difference will disappear, that everybody will be able to make his Motions and carry his Bills, and that nobody will be able to say at the end of the Session that there is an arrear of Business. That is a gross delusion, and it is impossible to be too earnest in our endeavour to dissipate this idea. The causes really lie elsewhere, far deeper than the mischiefs with which we are now endeavouring to deal. But it does not follow that it is not most reasonable to deal with those systematic mischiefs; and I feel it my duty to acknowledge the fair and considerate spirit in which they have thus far been dealt with by Her Majesty's Government.

MR. MOWBRAY said, that if anything could prove that the Resolutions before the House were a matter of the greatest necessity, such proof would be afforded by the language of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich and that of the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition. First, reference had been made to the proposal of his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the decision should rest with the House, and not with the Speaker. He was more inclined to agree with his hon. and learned Friend the Member for the City of Oxford (Sir William Harcourt) and the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition that the suspension of a Member should take place in consequence of a Standing Order of the House rather than be brought about by the vote of that House. He thought that the Speaker was the best person to judge of the conduct of any Member. There was this danger—that if the Speaker appealed to a thin House and a division took place in which a large number of the Friends of the inculpated Member came flowing into the House, the result would not be satisfactory. As to the punishment to be inflicted, he thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer rather erred on the side of leniency, though doubtless it was wiser to propose the matter in this shape, leaving its complete form to be determined by the discussion. It would be well to define what was meant by a Sitting, because they had had very protracted Sittings, especially in July, 1877. This Parliament having had more than three years' experience of obstruction, it was necessary to pass these Resolutions. There was no desire whatever to interfere with the legitimate freedom of debate, or with the privileges of hon. Members. The only object was to prevent obstruction. Let them hand down to the next Parliament a Standing Order for this purpose. It was the only way to deal effectually with this gigantic and growing evil. The whole question had been brought up on former occasions and had been re-opened. They had carefully considered every suggestion which had been brought before the House in 1878. Having all these before them, they were in a position to make the Resolution a Standing Order of the House and hand it on to the next House of Commons.

Mr. RYLANDS said, he had no wish to speak at length, but thought it desirable he should have the opportunity of expressing, in a few words, his intention of supporting the Government in the steps they had taken to meet what might, under some circumstances, be a great evil in the conduct of Business. Technically, the House was discussing the Amendment of the hon. Member for Plymouth (Mr. Sampson Lloyd); but as it was understood that the hon. Gentleman was ready to withdraw it, it was not necessary to refer to it. The Government, in taking the initiative in regard to this important change in the Business of the House, had relieved the other side of the House of much responsibility. He had always felt that any hon. Member putting forward a proposition such as that which the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) had put upon the Paper was assuming a responsibility that really belonged to Government; and though the hon. Gentleman should have full credit for his motives, it must be really a gratification to him to find the Government take upon themselves the responsibility of carrying it through. In passing, he must say that in the preparatory steps the Government were unfortunate in departing from the usual precedent in not consulting with the Leaders of the Opposition upon the terms of the Resolution the Government intended to lay before the House. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made an excuse that his departure from the ordinary course was because they had adopted the recommendation of the Select Committee; but it was not the fact that the Committee recommended exactly such a Resolution as now appeared, and he (Mr. Rylands) thought it would have been wiser if they had given the noble Lord an opportunity of making suggestions before placing the proposal before the House. The proposal, however, was laid on the Table without such a consultation; and the result was that the noble Lord, in a speech which must be admired for its clearness and ability, though he pointed out parts of the Resolution where he thought alterations might advantageously be made, yet he said he left the ultimate form of the Resolution to the responsibility of the Government, and would not move Amendments. He (Mr. Rylands) entirely agreed with the noble Lord that it was unfortunate Government had not consulted the leading Members of the Opposition side; but having heard the suggestion from the Front Bench, he hoped Government would be prepared to modify their proposals without putting the House to a division. So far as he was concerned, with the exception of the Amendment of his hon. Friend the Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn), in favour of making it a Sessional and not a Standing Order, he should decline to support any Amendments that had not the sanction of the Government. They had, on their responsibility, brought this Resolution before the House, with the object of dealing with what they believed to be a growing evil in the conduct of the proceedings of the House of Commons; and he was bound to say, although some Amendment might be made with advantage, yet they had treated the question with prudence and moderation. They were not now entering upon a crusade against legitimate obstruction—on both sides he hoped there was no wish to destroy that, because it was one of the essential matters in connection with a deliberative Assembly that a minority should retain the power of checking the action of the majority. All the Rules of the House of Commons implied the existence of this legitimate obstruction, and encouraged full opportunity for the exercise of the power in discussing the several stages of Bills. The Votes in Supply, the Report of Supply, the Appropriation Bill, in fact, in every direction, it would be found that the arrangements of the House of Commons had been wisely made to secure the minority opportunities by means of obstruction of resisting the will of the majority, who perhaps by hasty legislation were taking a course contrary to the public interest, and who, but for that check of the minority, might pass measures having an evil and permanent effect. He would not be a party to remove that power because of the obstruction in former Parliaments. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite obstructed certain measures they thought objectionable, and he had not a word to say against their conduct. On the Liberal side there had been obstruction also to measures thought objectionable, which in some cases had prevented the passage of measures; while, in other cases, the Government had been able to carry their measures contrary to the judgment of the minority. But, on the whole, legitimate obstruction was right and useful. He was not there, however, to justify what could be called illegitimate obstruction. He could not justify a policy of exasperation. He altogether went with the speech of the trusted Leader of the Irish Party (Mr. Shaw), who was no friend of this policy of exasperation, and he believed that many Members of the Irish Party felt with their Leader that if they wanted to get justice for Ireland they must cultivate the good feeling of the English people—not by attempting to control the House of Commons; if they took any such course it must only lead to exciting the combative feeling of the English, and the result of any such attempt would at once be put down. When they sought to put down obstruction which had been mischievous, let them not forget that deep down they would find the roots of this obstructive policy in the dissatisfaction and distress of the Irish people; and he echoed the wish of the Leader of the Irish Party that the House of Commons might be brought to do something with wisdom and justice, to draw more closely the bonds of union between the English and Irish people. As he had said, it was his intention to support the Government, and he was anxious to say that because there had been a persistent attempt by writers in certain newspapers to fasten on the Liberal Party a desire to thwart the Government in the passing of this Resolution—it had been suggested that the minority had entered into some kind of league with a certain section of the House with the view of obstructing the Government measures; that was altogether an unjustifiable imputation, and when it was repudiated by the front Bench, then the same newspaper repeated the charge against the Radical Members in the House. Now, speaking for himself, and also for those with whom he usually acted, he could say they did not wish to encourage wilful and persistent obstruction calculated in any way to impair the functions of the House; they were only anxious to preserve the rights of the minority, to guard the liberty every hon. Member enjoyed; and he believed that, without those rights, the House of Commons would fall in public estimation, and gradually lose a large amount of public support. The proposal that there should be an appeal from the Speaker to the House, when the offence contemplated by the Resolution should have been committed, was, in his opinion, a very unfortunate one, which he should like to see withdrawn. But the case was rather different with the action of the Chairman of Ways and Means, where it might be desirable to secure some safeguard. He agreed, and all must agree, in praising the prudence, the impartiality, and the discretion with which the present Chairman of Committees used the power intrusted to him; but he could not close his eyes to the fact that there were other hon. Gentlemen who, when the House was in Committee, might exercise the same important authority, and who might not be equally impartial. He must be understood as in no way making reference to the present Chairman of Ways and Means; but it was possible that the Gentleman holding that Office might be a strong partizan, and in a period of excitement might exercise his power in a manner making it desirable that there should be some check or control. Another point he wished to refer to was the repeated offence; and here he was in favour of making the penalty more stringent. The "second" offence should be that upon which the penalty should be enforced, and that penalty should be the suspension of the offender for a definite time, and not subject to a further vote. On the second offence there should be a definite term for which the Members should be suspended. Not for a long period. As to the proposal of the hon. and learned Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt) that the Member offending should be brought under the penalty of suspension for the remainder of the Session, that, with all respect to the hon. and learned Gentleman, he (Mr. Rylands) must say that he regarded as a perfectly monstrous proposal. For his own part, he thought it not at all impossible that, after passing the Resolution, the first to come under the penalty would be an English Member. Not an Irish Member; some Member, perhaps, like the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll), with an earnest purpose under great feelings of excitement, might support his views against the general opinion of the House, with a recklessness of consequences that might cause him to be named from the Chair. Was it then reasonable to propose that, in consequence, Derby should be disfranchised for a whole Session? In the same way, suppose some Home Rule Member had been named and excluded from service in the House, from both speaking and voting, could it be contemplated to disfranchise some Irish borough or county for the remainder of the Session? No, he rather admired the moderation of the Treasury Bench than the violent declaration of the hon. and learned Member for Oxford. The idea of the *clôture* he altogether repudiated. As the noble Lord (the Marquess of Hartington) very truly said, the Liberals had introduced more large legislative changes than Conservatives, and therefore had more interest in keeping down persistent obstruction; but where did those great changes spring from? Was it from the majorities, or from the front Opposition Benches? No, nor yet from the Treasury Bench. It was from the gradually-spreading development of public opinion in favour of questions which at the outset were supported by a very small minority. He (Mr. Rylands) could recollect the early action of the Anti-Corn Law League—of which association he was a member; how the small band of reformers were confronted by a large majority of both sides, whilst advocating principles that were most unpopular in the House, and having to meet violent opposition. Had there been a *clôture*, discussion would have been closed and the measure postponed. No doubt, at length the Liberal Party would have taken it up; but the *clôture* would certainly have postponed it. All great measures sprang from the opinion of the minority; and he, for one, while prepared to give the Government all the aid in his power to prevent the abuse of the privileges of debate, could not consent to inflict a stab on Liberal progress in this country by borrowing from the Continent those new-fangled ideas for controlling the rights of minorities.

Mr. PLUNKET joined with the other hon. Members who had already spoken in congratulating the Government on the very tranquil atmosphere in which their proposals were being discussed, and said he would endeavour to avoid saying anything which would unnecessarily dispel that tranquillity or raise a storm. At the same, time it would be a mistake if, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, they lost sight of the real gravity of the question under discussion, and forgot, in the time of absolute calm, that the time might come again when storms might be raised on the subject of obstruction similar to those they had experienced of late years. He must certainly say that the tranquillity of the evening was wonderful. Even the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich (Mr. Gladstone) had come into the debate, and had addressed the Government in a manner that must be very satisfactory to them, as nothing had happened during the last six months which would lead them to expect such serenity. He would not refer to the previous proceedings of that right hon. Gentleman further than to say that it was not long ago since he wrote in a well-known magazine strongly condemning the Government in the matter, and so entirely exonerating the conduct of every section of Her Majesty's Opposition, as to say that the Government themselves were the real Obstructionists. Under such circumstances, it must be a matter of great congratulation to the Government that the right hon. Gentleman had that evening assured the House that nothing could be more satisfactory than the conduct of Ministers, and that the Government deserved the greatest possible credit for the manner in which they had managed the business of the House. He, for one, as an humble supporter of the Government, very cordially thanked him for what he had said. With regard to the speech of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw), he had listened to it with great pleasure, and he could not help thinking that if what he had said, and the spirit in which he spoke, could be taken as an example of the spirit of all the Members of the Party which he so prudently and judiciously led, there would be no need of the Resolutions which they were discussing. He could not, however, congratulate the Opposition front Bench on the statement of the hon. Member for Cork that under no circumstances could any combination arise by which the Liberal Party would be able to retain the Home Rule Members within their ranks, for if that was so then the Liberal Party must either relinquish at once all hope of getting into Office, or else must obtain a supremacy at the next Election, so overwhelming as not only to deprive the Government of their present majority, but also to enable them to dispense with at least 60 or 70 Members on their own side of the House. Such self-denying ordinances had been heard of before in the Liberal Party and forgotten, and possibly so it might be again. With regard to the Resolution before the House, he wished to say, as to the first part of it, that he most cordially supported Her Majesty's Government, though as a Member of the Committee which sat to inquire into the subject he should have preferred the adoption of a Resolution in the form to which they, by a majority, had agreed. But when he came to the second part of the Resolution he must say quite frankly that he was entirely opposed to the proposal which was made by the Government. He listened the night before to what was said by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt), and though it was not very often he had the good fortune to agree with what that hon. and learned Gentleman said, on the present occasion he was able to adopt almost every word he said on that subject. He thought the punishment proposed to be inflicted by the Government was one of so light a nature that it would only be felt as a punishment by those Members who were very sensitive on such a matter, and it certainly was not such Members who were likely to offend. He would earnestly urge on the Government to amend that part of the Resolution, and make the penalty a real and serious one for the second offence. But when they came to the final part of the Resolution, that it should be a Standing Order and not merely a Sessional one, he again agreed with the Government that it should be a Standing Order, and he could not conceive any reason for making any alternative proposal. Let them take a practical view of the question. He did not wish to stir up any unpleasant memories on the part of the hon. Members, or to recall scenes of excitement; but at the same time they must not shut their eyes to what it was possible might take place in the future. Were they likely to have more or less obstruction in the next Parliament? The hon. Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell) was not present, and as he (Mr. Plunket) had already, on a previous occasion, spoken very strongly with regard to the political action of the hon. Member, on the present occasion he wished to speak as calmly as he possibly could; but no one would deny—it would be vain to deny—that in the Party whose action had called up so much excitement in the House, and had necessitated the introduction of these Resolutions against obstruction, the hon. Member for Meath had always taken a prominent part. The question arose therefore now, whether the Party who supported the hon. Member for Meath would be stronger or weaker in the next Parliament, and that was a question they all ought gravely to consider. He ventured to say that in many Irish constituencies the Members who had supported the hon. Member for Meath would be returned in considerable numbers. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw), when he pooh-poohed that danger, was certainly not expressing the current belief in Ireland. For his own part, he ventured to predict that the number of candidates returned in Ireland at the next Election under the banner of the hon. Member for Meath would mainly be limited by the amount of money which that hon. Member would succeed in collecting for electioneering purposes in America or elsewhere. He should be glad to be set right if he were wrong, but he understood that the original object of the visit of the hon. Member for Meath to America was to collect money for the promotion of that political movement with which he was connected; and, although the hon. Member for Cork was the nominal Leader of the Home Rule Party in Parliament, the hon. Member for Meath really had the control of that Party in Ireland. Therefore, if a penalty was to be imposed for obstruction at all it ought to be severe. It would be unfortunate, in his opinion, to make any change in the Rules of the House unless the change was real and efficacious. That the Resolution ought to be made a Standing Order, however, he perfectly agreed, and he hoped the Government would adhere to that view.

Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN said, that if there was any Member present whose eyes were not quick enough, and whose ears were not long enough to detect the presence of obstruction in the House, it would be useless to waste argument upon him. It was said that obstruction was an evil of old standing. Well, that was no doubt so, but never before the existence of the present Parliament had it assumed the form of a general tilt at all legislation whatsoever. It had usually been directed against one measure only, of which the Obstructives disapproved. In the present House of Commons, however, there were a number of talking machines, who went on with the greatest facility from hour to hour, stopping every kind of Business which happened to be on the Paper. The result was that the House had almost ceased to be a legislative body, and if a check were not put upon them it would soon cease to be even a deliberative body. If everyone of those Members went back to Ireland, into the far West, and brought back with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, it was obvious that the last state of that House would be worse than the first. The Resolutions of the Government certainly did not err on the side of severity. He rather feared that such nets would prove effective only against the smaller fry, and that the big fishes would break through them. It would be a repetition of the old story—

"Dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbas."

The Resolution, as it stood, seemed to place them in this dilemma, that the House must either vote adversely to the Speaker, or else it might happen that an offence would be committed in the presence of a dozen Members, and the penalty might be inflicted by two or three hundred. Of course, if the Rule worked badly, no one would wish that it should be a Standing Order. But these were matters of detail. The Leader of the House, backed by the opinion of a Select Committee, and recognizing the responsibility of his position, said—"This is what I want; I cannot get on without it;" and that being so, it became the duty of every Member to give the Resolution a cordial and a loyal support. It was intelligible compared with the series of propositions put down by the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) than which nothing more involved had been committed to paper since the days of Thucydides. Sooner or later the House would have to re-consider the Rules of its debates. The House had outgrown them; they were made for a different state of things, and also for a different class of Members. The Leader of the Opposition was not quite fairly dealt with in regard to what he said about the *clôture*. It was an un-English word; but if we called the thing "shut up," or something of that kind, we should take to it better; and sooner or later we must come to something of that kind. Half-a-dozen times a Session Bills were fully debated on the second reading, and again the same questions of principle were raised on the Motion to go into Committee, and the arguments that had been thrashed out in the first debate were repeated *ad nauseam* in the second. If this was debate, all he could say was, we paid a high price for the privilege. In 12 years' experience he had often seen a minority abuse its rights, but only on one occasion had he known a majority to do so. There was the best reason why the majority should not do it, for the consequences would recoil on itself. Every Irish question that was brought forward honestly and in good faith ought to receive the fullest consideration; but it was quite a different thing when speeches were made simply for the sake of speaking, and attempts were made to count the House simply for the purpose of wasting time. This was not the way in which Irish Members would ever obtain justice for Ireland; nor was it right they should obtain it in this way. The House of Commons would not allow itself to be bullied or worried into doing anything it would not otherwise do. It was one of the most patient Bodies that ever existed; but there was one thing it would not stand, and that no Assembly ought to stand, and that was that any person or body of men should use the Forms of the House simply to bring it into discredit and contempt.

SIR JOHN HAY said, he intended to give his support to the Resolutions, but he desired to call attention to one point which was worth the consideration of the Government. He had seen a good deal of what was called obstruction; and he attributed much of its success to the existence of the Rule that certain opposed Business could not be begun after half-past 12 A.M. When that Rule was adopted, then obstruction became successful in interfering with the Business of the House. He had always opposed that Rule, because there was Business that might be fairly and properly discussed in a small House of Members after the termination about midnight of the principal Business of the evening. It was only within the last 10 years that it had been considered advisable that this power of stopping Business should be vested, not in the House, but in any Member. The result had been obstruction of the ordinary course of Business. It had been carried so far that the letter "*a*" had been placed against the Criminal Code Bill, so that the Attorney General was prevented from advancing it a stage, notwithstanding the consideration it had previously received. Frequently pages of Amendments were placed upon the Notice Paper in order to prevent Bills of great importance being discussed; and often hon. Members who had given Notice of Amendments were not in their places when the Amendments were reached. It was impossible to attribute the stoppage of Public Business to what was called obstruction when such facilities for obstruction existed in the Standing Orders. Believing, as he did, that the 12.30 Rule was the cause of much of this interference with business, he regretted that it had become a Standing Order. It would be idle to pass this Resolution as a temporary measure, and not to leave it to their successors. If they did, after another Session had been wasted, the subject would have to be dealt with again. He could not promise to support the hon. Member for Ennis (Mr. Finigan), unless the Government supported his proposal; but he did not think it would be fair to a constituency that a suspended Member should not be allowed to record his vote. Divisions were sometimes close, and it would be difficult to justify the carrying of any measure by a majority of one while the vote of a suspended Member was excluded.

SIR CHARLES FORSTER would cordially support the proposal of the Government, although he was of opinion it fell short of that stringency which was required if a check were to be given to obstruction. It must be admitted that the Standing Orders of the House gave great facilities for obstruction, and even seemed to invite it. They were framed in former times to protect freedom of debate and to protect minorities. No one valued the right of free discussion more than he did, but it must not be suffered to interfere with the transaction of the Business of the country. Much as he disliked a tyrannical majority, he thought a factious majority worse. One form of obstruction was moving the adjournment of the House when an Answer was given that did not satisfy the Member who asked the Question. English Members were as great offenders in this matter as the Irish. Another Parliamentary scandal was the system of talking out questions on Wednesday. Owing to that practice, the Wednesday, which was reserved for Private Members' Bills, was seldom utilized. He suggested there should be a new Standing Order that at 20 minutes to 6 the question should be put without further debate. If the House could not otherwise protect itself against a factitious minority, he should very reluctantly be driven to the adoption of the *clóture.* He would not vest the *clóture* in the hands of a bare majority; but if three-fourths of the House considered that the debate might be closed, it might fairly be so without being charged with unduly restricting discussion. Out-of-doors there was great impatience of the repeated delays of Public Business. Speech was silvern, silence golden, and what they wanted was less talking and more voting, fewer speeches and more frequent legislation. It would, he believed, be the business of a future House of Commons to revise the Standing Orders, with the double view of expedition of Business, and with full consideration of what was being done.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he coincided almost entirely in the remarks of the hon. Baronet who had just sat down. He had been in dread that if obstruction continued, the House would have to suffer what the nurse of Horace predicted would be his fate—

> "Hunc neque dira venena, neque hosticus auferet ensis,
> Nec laterum dolor, aut tussis, nec tarda podagra;
> Garrulus hunc quando consumet cumque; loquaces,
> Si sapiat, vitet, simul atque adoleverit ætas."

That they would, in fact, be talked to death. After the discussions of the previous night, bearing in mind that they had still to discuss in detail various Amendments placed on the Paper, he thought they had now arrived at the time when they might come to a decision on the question immediately before them. That question was whether the proposals of the Government or that of his hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth (Mr. Sampson Lloyd) should form the staple of their consideration. His hon. Friend objected altogether to the scheme proposed by the Government, and proposed a different form of procedure. He ventured to say a few words on his proposal by anticipation before it was made, and he would not go into those objections again. He thought the general feeling was in favour of adopting the Resolutions of the Government as a basis of proceeding, and he understood that his hon. Friend would be willing to withdraw his Resolution. If that were so, he would say a very few words on some of principal observations which had been made on the proposals of the Government. Of course, when they came to the different Amendments he should consider it his duty to express an opinion on them; but, speaking generally, there were three or four points which had been particularly urged during the discussion. He wished, before touching on them, to express his acknowledgments for the manner in which the question had been discussed. Even among those less disposed to look favourably upon the Resolutions, there had been a fair tone and an amount of temperate language for which the House might be grateful, and for which the Government were grateful. Throughout the debate there had not occurred anything which was not consistent with the character and dignity of the House of Commons. He did not wonder that a good deal of criticism had taken place on a Resolution which, after all, was of a novel character, and it was quite right that it should be tested in every possible way. He thought, on the whole, they had reason to be satisfied with having adopted a course which was neither too severe nor yet insufficient for its immediate purpose. The immediate purpose of the Resolution, it should be borne in mind, was not to alter the Rules of the House or to affect the mode of doing Business fairly, but to prevent those occasional interruptions which were unseemly and prevented the Rules of the House from having fair play. The question was one which had been carefully considered and repeatedly discussed. It was the subject of examination before the Committee, and on the recommendation of the Committee the Resolution was mainly founded. When the Government came to consider the matter carefully they found it necessary to make some changes in the Resolution adopted by the Committee. The right. hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich (Mr. Gladstone), in a speech which was generally very friendly to their proceedings, commented on certain points. In the first place, he observed on the words "or otherwise," and he asked what those words meant, and what new offence they covered. The words were inserted in the Resolution, at the suggestion of the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread), after "Rules of the House, persistently and wilfully obstructing the Business of the House," by a majority of 9 to 6, the noble Lord leading the Opposition voting with the majority. The intention was to prevent any quibble arising in the definition of obstruction. Nothing was more difficult than to define obstruction. It must be left, as an hon. Member had stated, to the instinct of the House; and if the Speaker should decide that an hon. Member was guilty of abusing the Rules of the House he would undoubtedly bring himself within the Resolution. Another question was of a more serious character; when a Member was to be dealt with, should it be by suspending, or only by putting him to silence? The power of suspending was that exercised by Parliament in old times. It was rather frequently resorted to. In the 17th century there were a good many instances; but in Sir Erskine May's book, after giving a number of instances down to 1692, he said by temporary suspension of a Member the rights of the electors were in a manner infringed, but the House had the unquestionable power of imprisonment, and if the House could imprison the House could unquestionably also suspend. In the Committee of 1878, he put the question to the Speaker, whether he would prefer putting the Member offending to silence only or to suspension, and the answer was, "I should say suspension during the Sitting of the House." And to the question, "Suspension from taking part in the Business of the House in any form?" Mr. Speaker replied, "Yes, in any form." That, therefore, was the opinion both of Mr. Speaker and of Sir Erskine May. He must say there would be considerable awkwardness in allowing a Member to sit in the House if the power of speaking were taken from him. For they all knew that obstruction was very much a matter of arrangement and prompting; and it might happen that a Member who had been named and put to silence might, without rising to address the House, take a very active part in prompting further measures of obstruction. It would be, therefore, more advisable that the punishment should be suspension from the service of the House. It might even be that the Member would be in such a state of excitement that he would find it difficult to sit in his place without interrupting others. It would be a more reasonable thing if they found a person setting himself deliberately to obstruct Business to make him leave the House altogether. He did not think that it was a question of punishing the constituency. It was just as well that the constituency should have notice that the Member had conducted himself in that particular way, and if the constituency were dissatisfied with his conduct and with the loss of their rights and privileges, they might take measures to communicate with him, and request him for the future so to conduct himself that he might be of use to them in that House. As to another point which had received a good deal of consideration, it was a most difficult question to determine in what form the act of suspension should take place. The first impression, no doubt, was that it would be better it should be by the act of the Speaker or the Chairman. It was said that the Speaker was the guardian of their Rules, and when he saw that a Member had so far misconducted himself that he was obliged to call him to Order, name him, and bring him within the reach of the new Rule, that ought to be done by the authority of Mr. Speaker himself, and there should be no reference to the House to support the authority of the Chair. The noble Lord put it in this way—"What was the House called upon for? Was it to support the authority of the Speaker, or to neutralize or negative the Speaker's authority? In the first case it was unnecessary, and in the second mischievous." If the House had nothing to do but to consider the action of Mr. Speaker, there would be a good deal of force in these arguments. In the evidence taken in 1878, the Speaker expressed his preference for a decision taken by the Chair; at the same time he saw no objection to a vote being taken, provided it was taken without amendment or debate. But they must remember they had to deal, not only with the case of Mr. Speaker, but with a much more difficult case—that of the Chairman of Ways and Means. In speaking of the Chairman of Ways and Means, he spoke with the most perfect and entire respect for the hon. Gentleman who occupied that distinguished position, and he was sure that no one would be elected to the position of Chairman of Ways and Means in whose impartiality the House would not have confidence. But, of course, the position of "the official Chairman," as the right hon. Member for Greenwich called him, was very different from that of Mr. Speaker, because when the House was not in Committee he was accustomed to take his seat on the benches of the House, and to bear a part in the debates; and he might occasionally have to exercise his functions in keeping Order in the case of a Gentleman who might be reckoned as a political opponent. That was not the case with Mr. Speaker, who was so entirely removed from their Party struggles, that no question could be raised as to his impartiality. And then they had to bear in mind that they had to consider the position not only of the official Chairman of Ways and Means, but of some other Gentlemen, who, in the absence of the Chairman, and without his experience, might from time to time be asked to take the Chair. The feeling which prompted the hon. Member for Chester (Mr. Raikes) in giving his evidence before the Committee of 1878 was one which they ought to respect. The hon. Member said on that occasion—

> "The power of dealing with any offence of this description appears to me to reside in the House, or in the other case in the Committee rather than in the Chair. I should prefer to see any punitive or corrective power placed in the hands of the Committee or the House, as the case may be, rather than in those of the Chair."

That was an opinion which the hon. Member for Chester still entertained. Well, if that was the case with regard to the Chairman in Committee, it became very difficult to adopt a different course with respect to Mr. Speaker. There could be no doubt that, after the Speaker had taken the solemn decision involved in naming a Member, the House would support his ruling. There was no doubt of that. But a considerable amount of odium would be taken off the Chair by the prompt recognition on the part of the House of the justice of the decision. It was easy to imagine what might happen in such and such circumstances. He did not believe that on a case of obstruction arising, the Speaker would be left without a considerable number of Members in the House. It would be the duty of those responsible for for the conduct of Business to see that there was a proper number present to support Mr. Speaker in any action he might think necessary. Though holes might be picked in any scheme which might be laid before the House, he thought it would be better for them to accept the main lines of the Government scheme, even though they thought it desirable that some Amendments in detail should be moved. One of the great difficulties under which they laboured in dealing with these cases of obstruction arose from a sort of confusion in the minds of some Gentlemen of high authority from the novelty of the case and uncertainty as to the precedents to be applied. Something occurred suddenly which seemed to require action which should be taken promptly. A discussion ensued, and a Member was in doubt as to the precedents he could lay his hands on. Perhaps some distinguished Member of the front Opposition Bench rushed out and came back with a volume of *Hatsell's Precedents*, and perhaps found in those precedents some difficulty as to the course which should be pursued. Then there would be a failure of justice, and the House would be in a distinctly worse position for the hasty and ill-considered step which had been taken. There were Gentlemen—it was only human nature—who, while they disliked disorderly proceedings, would not be sorry to see their opponents take a wrong step. It was necessary, therefore, that they should make some arrangements by which they might have some promptitude and certainty. He was told that the Resolution was too mild and would probably be futile, and that the Order of 1877 was a futile Order. He did not recognize the truth of that saying. It was said nobody was suspended under that Order except Mr. Whalley, who was not particularly in contemplation when the Order was made. It did not follow, because an Order was not often acted upon, that it was, therefore, inefficacious. The effect of that was to prevent for the remainder of that Session any breach of Order of the kind which had been aimed at. So a solemn declaration by the House that it considered these cases of obstruction to be serious matters, and that it had provided the machinery for dealing with them, would go a long way indeed in strengthening the hands of the Speaker and the Chairman, and in impressing on hon. Members themselves the necessity of conforming their conduct to the Rules of the House. He agreed, too, with his noble Friend the Postmaster General, that Rules which were not too stringent were far more likely to be observed and made use of than Rules which were somewhat severe. He abstained from going into the question of the amount of punishment, or whether the second or the third offence should be taken as the occasion for a more lengthened suspension. These were details which could be discussed at the proper time. He thought that if they did not make the Resolution a Standing Order, they would not be doing their duty. They had much bitter experience of this particular form of obstruction, and they thought they had devised a probable method of stopping it. They had no right to hand down an evil which had grown up under themselves without making an earnest attempt to check it. He believed the proceedings of the new Parliament would be very greatly facilitated if they were armed with what, after the most careful consideration, was believed to be the best remedy against obstruction. He earnestly trusted, therefore, that if the Rule were adopted, the House would not question the propriety of making it a permanent and Standing Order. In conclusion, he expressed a hope that the House would bear in mind the importance of getting on as fast as they could, and of keeping as close to the actual business of the Resolutions as was consistent with freedom of debate.

MR. SAMPSON LLOYD thought it would accord with the feeling of the House, if he asked leave to withdraw his Amendment. ["No!"]

MR. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN remarked that, after what had fallen from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he felt that if he persevered with the Amendment of which he had given Notice he should place himself in such hostility to the Resolutions that he should be imperilling what he wished to see—namely, their safe passage through the House. Still, if anyone else thought fit to move his Amendment, he should give his vote in favour of it. He regretted, indeed, the course which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had taken, in first asking the House to consider the general spirit of his Resolutions before dealing with the various Amendments, and afterwards, in the speech to which they had just listened, entering himself into the details of all those Amendments. That which he (Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen) proposed involved a great Constitutional principle, and he should have been glad to have had it fairly and fully discussed. What did they want to do? To put an end to obstruction. Now, the obstruction complained of was caused by undue prolixity of speech, or repetition of speeches, with the evident intention of wearying the House and delaying its Business, and this they would at once stop if they decided to deprive the offending Member of the privilege of addressing the House. If they proceeded further they went beyond the actual remedy they required, and might be accused out-of-doors of being actuated by vindictive feeling against an individual, instead of only a desire to remove an obstacle to the progress of Business. But there was a much graver question behind. When they suspended a Member from speaking, it was the Member they punished; but when they deprived him of his vote, they punished his constituency. It was no violent stretch of imagination to suppose that the victim of this Resolution might be an Irish Member. The names of the hon. Members for Meath, Cavan, and Mayo had been mentioned in the debate. Suppose that one of these Members was suspended during the discussion of an Irish question. The suspension might be right enough as regarded the speech; but what reason was there that an important Irish constituency should be prevented from expressing its opinion upon a question in which it was interested by the vote of its Representative? The constituency had committed no crime against the House; it had no power to get rid of its Member, even if it desired to do so, before a General Election, and it was unjust to deprive it of the right given to it by the Constitution. There was also another important consideration. Many hon. Members whom he (Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen) was addressing had only experience of the Parliament of 1874, or of that of 1868, in one of which a Liberal and in the other a Tory Government had a large majority. But he had sat in Parliaments in which Parties were much more evenly balanced, and it was not so long ago that the fate of a Ministry had been decided by one vote. Now, he was not one of those who abused his political opponents, and he said that, from whatever political Party the Government was constructed, they were likely to be men of high character and honour. But in what a position would such men be placed by this Resolution in times of evenly-balanced Parties and political excitement. They might fear to apply it, lest they should be accused of an attempt to get rid of a political opponent at a critical moment, or, thinking it their duty to apply it, they might be opposed on such grounds, and a most undesirable Party conflict would follow. As the noble Lord (Lord John Manners) had observed, the severity of the punishment would defeat its own object, and the Resolution would very likely remain a dead letter in consequence. Still, the desirability of passing these Resolutions was beyond everything else, and he was not prepared to move any Amendment. He cordially supported the proposal of the Government to make the Resolution a Standing Order, considering that the present House of Commons had had full experience of obstruction, and ought not to leave the burden of providing against it to their less experienced successors.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY said, that as this debate had proceeded it had undergone a great change, inasmuch as while at first many hon. Members had expressed an intention to oppose the Resolutions of the right hon. Gentleman, but few had in the course of the discussion upon them gone further than to criticize their details. All opposition seemed to be at an end. That change in the nature of the debate well illustrated the position in which the Home Rule Members were placed. Since he first entered that House, he had been witness of no attempt which had been so utterly futile as that which had been made by the Home Rule Party to oppose these Resolutions. The support which these Resolutions had received from the Liberal Party was cordial and unanimous, and he never recollected hearing such an enthusiastic cheer as that which greeted the right hon. Gentleman when he announced his intention of adopting the course he had done.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY, resuming his observations, said, it was also evident there was considerable feeling out-of-doors, and that the proposals of the Government were strongly backed up, and he was satisfied that had the right hon. Gentleman thought it wise and right to propose much more stringent measures than he had done, he would only have excited greater enthusiasm among all Parties in his favour, and would probably have had no difficulty in passing them. Without stopping to inquire into the cause of the great unanimity of opinion on the subject, he wished to enter his protest against the objects and intentions conveyed by these Resolutions. He was aware that they were about to be carried, and that it would be futile for him to propose anything in their stead. He, however, as a Member of the minority on this question, had a right to vote against them, and to set forth with as little bitterness as possible his view of their fault and vice. In his opinion, these Resolutions were calculated to leave the problem they were intending to deal with still unsolved, and would not be effectual in putting down obstruction in its Protean forms. In saying that, he did not speak in the spirit of a threat or with any desire that difficulties should be thrown in the way of the Government by the House. In searching out the origin of obstruction, he had been led to consider why the proceedings of the Home Rule Party had assumed an aspect so disagreeable to the House as to lead to the introduction of these Resolutions. He (Mr. O'Shaughnessy) had taken part in the proceedings of the Home Rule Party since 1874, and there was no doubt that the tendency to adopt those measures which had aroused the indignation of the right hon. Gentleman and of so many hon. Members had been brought about by the manner in which Irish proposals had been treated by the Government and by the House. He spoke not now of the Home Rule proposals, but of proposals for the amendment of particular laws which had been laid before the House with the assent of the vast majority of the Irish people; and the fate of those proposals had been uniformly unfortunate. It was true that those proposals had received a full and fair hearing by that House; but that fact had merely aggravated the disappointment and the exasperation of Irishmen with regard to the questions in which they were so deeply interested. Thus the question of the Land was brought forward, but the Land Laws stood at the same point as after the passing of the Land Act of 1870; and there was profound disappointment in Ireland at their remaining in that state. The Home Rule Members and the people of Ireland believed that a great deal of the misfortunes which now afflicted that country would not have arisen had there been timely alteration of the Land Laws. The Government was represented in Ireland by a right hon. Gentleman who regarded all proposals on that subject, such as those suggested by the Home Rule Members, and which were desired by the large body of the Irish people, as a progress in the direction of Communism. The important Act in reference to Intermediate Education in Ireland was only obtained after a delay of three or four years, and considerable pressure from the active Irish Party in the House; and the Irish University question was only settled after a long series of debates, which would doubtless be termed obstructive, on the Estimates for the Queen's University. This was the fate of a variety of other Irish questions of very great interest, on which the majority of the Irish people felt very deeply and with great unanimity. His late Leader and Colleague (Mr. Butt) brought forward measures repeatedly, and won sympathy on all sides by his eloquence and geniality. But for his hard work in connection with those questions, he would have been alive to-day; but after four years' labour on the principles adopted by Mr. Butt, nothing had been done. Everything ability and earnestness could do on the Land, Education, Franchise, and Grand Jury questions was tried by Mr. Butt, and found of no avail. That being so, the Irish Members had discussed among themselves the advisability of using another leverage in the transaction of Irish affairs, namely—by making their weight felt in English and Imperial matters. They thought that their Predecessors had too much confidence in themselves in speaking on Irish affairs, and that if they had asserted a strong and independent position on other questions, they might have effected something more of a practical nature in the Business of their own country. The idea lay dormant while Mr. Butt brought his measures before the House, but finally it entered the heads of some Home Rule Members to try what the new leverage could do. The view he (Mr. O'Shaughnessy) had always taken of that course was that as long as Irish Members were discussing English or Imperial affairs to move the judgment of the House upon them, they were not only literally within their rights, but that they were acting according to the spirit of the Constitution. He was also of opinion that when an hon. Member stood up in the House for the mere purpose of permanently occupying its time, from that moment he advanced into what deserved to be called "obstruction." In saying that, he did not wish to be understood as saying that in no circumstances was deliberate obstruction unjustifiable, because almost all the proposals they had made in the interest of their country had been rejected. What struck him about obstruction pure and simple was that it would be an extremely imprudent thing for a small minority to make use of obstruction, because, while an active interference by Irish Members in English and Imperial affairs was a strong lever to influence the conduct of the House and the Government, the weapon would surely be broken if it were overstrained. He therefore thought that in order to retain the power of acting vigorously on English and Imperial subjects, that weapon should be used cautiously. The cure that he would suggest for obstruction was that the House should deal in a fairer and more adequate manner with Irish questions. He was sure that if the Irish demands for reform had even been partially considered, with a view to their being dealt with in a business-like way, during the last three or four years, there would have been no obstruction. He could speak as to this from personal knowledge, for he had known cases in which a fair hearing on the part of the Government had led to an immediate cessation of obstruction. The hon. Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell) had told him that if the Government would bring forward the Intermediate Education Bill, and do their best to pass it, and state their intention to deal at a future time with the University question, he would put no difficulties in their way for the rest of the Session. The Government did bring in the Education Bill; and though they made no promise as to the University question, there was no sign of obstruction during the remainder of the Session. Some hon. Gentlemen thought that the Resolutions would be successful; others were of opinion that they were too weak. For his part, he thought they would have no effect whatever in checking an active policy on the part of the Irish Members. The only danger which Irish Members were likely to incur was, that if they followed the example and the precedent set by hon. Members on the other side in former years—if they became real Obstructionists—indignation would no doubt be raised against them, and their measures would be defeated; but if they pursued an active policy with regard to English and Imperial affairs, he believed that, avoiding obstruction, and using that leverage for the furtherance of Irish measures, they could bring such an influence to bear on the counsels of that House, and would acquire such a power as would no doubt carry their point on many subjects as to which they now had little hope of success, and be more powerful in having adopted reforms which they had long advocated outside the question of Home Rule. There was one prospect arising out of the passing of these Resolutions which, he confessed, he viewed with some pleasure, and that was that they would become a united Party. Should that occur, he believed that a united Irish Party, acting with discrimination in English and Imperial affairs in that House, would produce such a spirit of readiness on the part of hon. Gentlemen, both Whig and Tory, according to which Government might be in power, to deal with Irish affairs as would make those affairs much less a burden than they now were to those who had to administer the government of the country.

SIR GEORGE BOWYER said, he would confine the few observations he had to make to a single point—namely, the suspension of a Member. That was a very important subject, and a much more serious one than the Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed to think. It was not merely a question of punishing a Member, but a great Constitutional question, arising out of the Common Law of this country, was involved. He was prepared to state that there was no precedent for such suspension, although there had, he admitted, been suspension of individual Members in evil days—during the reign of Charles I. and Charles II.—a time it was very unsafe to draw precedents from. He would mention one or two instances. On the 6th of November, 1641, Sir Norton Knatchbull was suspended from his privileges as a Member during the pleasure of the House. Again, Mr. Fry was suspended from sitting in the House until he gave satisfaction to the House. On the 3rd of July, 1661, Mr. Long was suspended for not having received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and until he communicated. In April, 1670, Sir John Prettyman was suspended until he produced Robert Holmes, who claimed privileges as his son; and in March, 1692, Mr. Carringford was suspended from the exercise of his privileges until he should attend in his place—a sentence which might be regarded as somewhat of an Irish bull, for he could not exercise the privileges from which he was suspended until he attended in his place. But all these were arbitrary acts, and were totally inapplicable and unsuited to the present day. This, too, he could assert—that for 200 years there was no precedent to be found of a Member being suspended from his privileges as a Member of that House. He might be told that the imprisonment of a Member involved his suspension; but that he denied, for "suspension" meant an actual, and not a consequential, deprivation of a privilege. Then, again, if they deprived a Member of the opportunity of discharging the duty of voting in that House, they would really abrogate for the time being the franchises vested in the constituency, franchises conferred by Common Law or Statute, and which could only be taken away by an Act of the Legislature. He would remind the House, too, that it was a fundamental principle of Common Law that every Member of that House represented not only his own constituency, but all the Commons of England and Scotland. If he wished to stand for any borough or constituency, he should first vacate his seat, and for the reason he had just stated. A Member was not a delegate sent up by a particular constituency to do what they thought right, but a Member for the whole Commons of the Realm, and was bound to take a course which was beneficial to the Commons of the whole United Kingdom. A Member of that House represented not only his own constituency, but also the Commons of the Realm, and the right to vote was vested in him not only by the Common Law, but also by Statute; and they could not repeal Common Law and Statute Law by a mere Resolution of the House, or by anything short of an Act of Parliament. Therefore, it was utterly illegal and unconstitutional to deprive a Member of his vote in the way proposed, either for a time or altogether. It was a proposal which could not be justified by precedent; it might be supported by instances not worth the name of precedents, taken from the evil times of our history, but it was undoubtedly illegal and unconstitutional. It was not a question of punishing a Member or a constituency, but it was a question of attempting to alter the law of the land by a Resolution of the House. It was quite sufficient if a Member was silenced, and not allowed to speak. It was by speaking he would have been guilty of obstruction, and it was quite enough to deprive him of the power he had abused. But it was only by an Act of Parliament that the law of the land could be altered.

MR. O'CLERY, after expressing his surprise that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should have attempted to close the debate, said, that he felt bound to notice the extreme alacrity with which the Members of the Liberal Party had responded to the appeal of the right hon. Gentleman. They found both that on the preceding night, and on the present occasion, the occupants of the front Opposition Bench and hon. Members above the Gangway generally vied with each other how they could best show their readiness to support the right hon. Gentleman. The hon. Members sitting below the Gangway were also represented as entertaining a similar disposition. The hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands), who seemed to arrogate to himself the position of Representative of the English Radicals in that House, wished to convey that the Radicals as a Party supported the Resolutions. He (Mr. O'Clery) did not know whether it was by reason of the result of the elections of Liverpool and Southwark that the Liberals were manifesting a tendency to separate themselves from the Irish Members; but he hoped his countrymen would note the fact that Liberals and Radicals were equally as ready as Conservatives to curtail the privileges that had been used by a certain section of Members of the House. He said a certain section, because he was bound to say these Resolutions were mainly directed against the Representatives of the Irish nation. They had been told by the hon. and learned Member for Louth (Mr. Sullivan), in the course of a very able speech, of the obstruction which was practised in 1870 by Conservative Members, who were then in a minority; and, no doubt, the Liberal majority of that time uttered many bitter complaints; but no one dreamt then of putting in force a Draconian Code such as the Chancellor of the Exchequer now proposed to the House. And why was that? Because the obstructives in that case were Englishmen, who were naturally jealous of their individual rights in that House. But it became quite a different matter when Irishmen attempted to carry out the ordinary freedom of debate enjoyed by English Members. Then, indeed, a cry of obstruction was immediately raised. He would remind the House that Irish Representatives did not always represent constituencies in the sense in which English Members represented counties and boroughs. The former represented a nation whose Parliament had been suppressed, and a Government which had been taken away, and in putting forward this Code the House endeavoured to stifle as much as possible the voice of that nation. It was not the first time that the House had, in various ways, endeavoured to curtail the power of the Irish Members. He believed that there had not been a single measure submitted to the House by the majority of the Irish Representatives since the General Election of 1874 which had not been, directly or indirectly, obstructed. A Motion with reference to the development of the Irish fisheries had been carried, but nothing had been done by the Government to give effect to it. How often had the late Mr. Butt failed to obtain due consideration for measures he introduced? How often, on "Irish Wednesdays," had English Members declined to listen to the debate, and then voted in the majority against the Irish Members? This was obstruction in its grossest form. Over and over again the question of the assimilation of the franchises had been brought before the House, and on one occasion the Irish Bill was only lost by six votes; but care was taken, by the issue of a strong Whip, that it should not occur again. To-night the question of Irish absenteeism had been shunted, in order that the House might resume the discussion of this Resolution, which was of no importance to the Irish people compared with the expenditure of absentee landlords. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer was bound to carry his Resolution, because the Press, which seemed to rule the country, taunted him with want of backbone and with being unstable in his Leadership. In his heart, no doubt, the right hon. Gentleman saw the justice of the case of the Irish Members; and as a freedom-loving Englishman, he could not, until overborne by the Press, come forward with this Draconian Code to stifle the freedom of debate. Three years ago he (Mr. O'Clery) expressed an opinion that the highest duty of the Irish Members, under the circumstances in which they found themselves, was to withdraw from the House. He cited the case of the Hungarian Representatives in the Austrian Reichsrath, who withdrew from the House, with the result of hastening, instead of retarding, the restoration of the Hungarian Constitution. In that way they expedited the solution of the difficulties which formerly existed between Austria and Hungary. He hoped the attention of the Irish people would be called to the question of the withdrawal of the Irish Members from that House, and that they would sanction it. He knew that a deliberate attempt had been made to arouse a feeling of English prejudice against Ireland, and he thought that was a very dangerous thing indeed, for the Irish people of the present day would not allow their national aspirations to be stifled in the manner which was being attempted. He had no doubt that the Resolutions were mainly directed to prevent the feeling of dissatisfaction which the arbitrary conduct of the Majority of the House would create; but the Liberals and the Radicals who sat in that House ought not to have allowed themselves to fall into the trap set for them. With regard to the question of withdrawal, he was bound to say that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer persevered with his Resolutions, and enforced them to the letter, and continued to manifest the tendency which was now shown on the opposite side of the House, to fetter the expression of Irish opinion in that House, he believed it would be the duty of Ireland to recall her Representatives from an Assembly in which they practically had no voice. He opposed the Resolutions *in toto*, and considered they were aimed directly at Irish Members.

The O'DONOGHUE said, he looked on the situation as a very serious one, and he looked forward with alarm to the consequences which he thought must result from the proposed changes in the Rules of the House. Nothing in the world was more certain than that these Resolutions were framed in anticipation of action which might be taken by Irish Members. He believed they had been framed with a view to what might occur in the new Parliament. The Government, for reasons which they could not call on them to divulge, but the nature of which they could easily conjecture, had come to the conclusion that it would be less difficult to carry these Resolutions now than when the constitution of Parliament had been re-invigorated by the admixture of new blood. The Resolutions were intended to meet the action of the Irish constituencies at the approaching General Election. The Government did not doubt that difficulties, which the Resolutions were intended to meet, would exist in a more formidable shape in the new Parliament, and this would give rise to unpleasantness after the new Rule had been in operation for some time. He charged the Government with having an electioneering object in view in proposing at the present time to deal with obstruction in the way suggested. They were doing their best to rouse the fiercest passions of the people of England and Scotland, and to turn them in the direction most likely to serve the political necessities of the Tory Party. The Resolutions were the offspring of a long-deliberated, carefully-matured plan for the execution of which they thought this the most opportune time; they were the machinery designed to enable a majority of that House to subject to the dignity of enforced silence and the deprivation of legislative functions, the Representatives of Ireland who should have the temerity of pressing with importunate earnestness, that the wishes, opinions, and demands of the Irish people should receive legislative sanction. He must complain of the allegation on the part of certain newspapers against hon. Members of the House, because of the course they had adopted in moving and supporting the Amendment to the Address to Her Majesty replying to the Most Gracious Speech from the Throne. He held that not only was it right, but it was their duty, to criticize the conduct of Her Majesty's Government with respect to the question of relief to the Irish poor. He could make that statement with a clear conscience, because he had not taken any part in that debate, that the claims, wishes, and demands of the Irish people should receive legislative sanction. The Government intended to deal with obstruction without being able to define what obstruction really was, and in the absence of that definition the effect of the Resolution must depend on the temper of the Speaker and the temper of the House. If the Speaker should happen to be—what he had been often before, and might be again—a man of violent temper, of unsound judgment, of unblushing partizanship, and with strong anti-Irish prejudices, it was impossible to see a limit to the confusion, the disorder, the tumult in and out of Parliament to which these Resolutions must give rise. If the Speaker directed the attention of the House to an hon. Member whose conduct he (the O'Donoghue) would describe by the term obstruction, the House must almost of necessity suspend that Member from the Business of the House. For the House not to do so would be equivalent to a Vote on Censure on the Speaker, and would expose him to ridicule and inevitably lower his authority. Even if they were ensured that all Speakers would be endowed with all the high qualities, which every Member of the House gladly recognized in the present occupant of that Chair, a hard strain would be put upon the Speaker to resist the feeling of the House, if it were in a frame of mind for vindicating the supremacy of the House over a garrulous and querulous minority for vindicating the right of England, endeavouring to regulate everything for Irishmen according to English notions of right and wrong, or English whims and prejudices. If they could depend on the character of future Speakers, and on their being always strong and upright men, and also on the calmness and good temper of the House at any time when a question of obstruction was to be considered, then they might conclude that these Resolutions would be a dead letter. But when they could not count upon either of these things, then the passing of these Resolutions must imperil the rights of the Irish Members, make their position precarious, and leave them to take their chance between the caprice of a Speaker and the caprice of the House. What was called obstruction in its permanent and formidable shape was of modern creation. No doubt Parliamentary history furnished instances of Members who had from time to time resisted the opinion of the House and endeavoured to press their own peculiar views upon it. The most memorable instance he could recall was that of right hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr. Gladstone) when opposing the Divorce Bill. He moved countless Amendments, made innumerable speeches; for days and weeks he held the House captive and enthralled by the charms of his genius, and his many assailants at bay by the power of his giant intellect. But the right hon. Gentleman had many pigmy imitators, such as the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Judge Advocate General. But all imitators alike, whether giant or pigmy, felt that if they carried resistance beyond a certain point, they would have made themselves ridiculous, for the action of these right hon. and hon. Gentlemen had been dictated by reasons of a self-sufficient character. It was begun as an objection to the particular measure, and their opposition ceased when it was evident that to persevere further was useless and absurd. More recently the hon. Members for Meath (Mr. Parnell), Cavan (Mr. Biggar), Mayo (Mr. O'Connor Power), Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell), and others had taken a course not very satisfactory to the House. Would anyone say that these hon. Members had been acting merely as individuals, and that in what they where saying and doing they were merely expressing their own opinions? No one would venture to say so, because it would not be true. He believed that his hon. Friends and those who acted with them, commanded the absolute approval of their constituents, and had acquired the universal confidence of their country. His hon. Friends stood behind an impregnable barrier—the duty they owed their country, and that duty must be fulfilled, no matter how disagreeable it might be for English Members to see that they could not override and spurn the demands of the Irish people. The difficulty they had got into had arisen from compelling the Parliament of Ireland to sit there, and they were now endeavouring to wriggle out of the difficulty by branding those who faithfully discharged their duties to their constituents as being guilty of a breach of the usages of Parliament. Obstruction, as he had said, was of modern creation. It did not exist in O'Connell's time, nor at any time when a considerable majority of Irish Members were the mere nominees of two political classes. Obstruction had been brought forward by the free Irish constituencies, and was the expression of the determination of the people, who never had and never could recognize the jurisdiction of the present Parliament. Hon. Members might call that conduct what they pleased and describe it as they would; but the world would regard it as it really was—the manifestation of the resolve of the Irish people to assert the distinct nationality of their country, and her title to legislative independence. He would certainly do all he could to oppose these Resolutions, which he believed to have been designed to hamper and strangle the efforts of those Irish Members who came to that House prepared to do their duty.

Mr. FINIGAN said, that the hon. and learned Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Plunket) had taken the trouble to mis-state facts in connection with his (Mr. Finigan's) illustrious Friend the hon. Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell). The illustrious and hon. Member for Meath had gone out on a mission of charity which ought to have been discharged by that House. Had it not been for the efforts of the illustrious Member for Meath, the people of Ireland would have been craving aid from a Government which never showed the slightest symptom of charity towards the Irish people. He denied *in toto* the base statements of the hon. and learned Member that the illustrious Member for Meath was engaged in collecting funds for an electoral campaign in Ireland. The funds in question were collected for the purposes of the Land League, and not for electoral purposes. When the time came for collecting a fund for those purposes, if it ever did, the money required would be forthcoming, without having to make an appeal to the English or any other nation. With regard to the Resolution before the House, he understood that when a Member was named by the Speaker as an Obstructionist the Division Bell would be rung, and Gentlemen who had not heard a word of the debate would be whipped into the House to vote upon a question which they, necessarily, could know nothing about. He would oppose any such proposal. But if the Chancellor of the Exchequer would undertake that only those within the House at the time should vote on the alleged obstructionist conduct he would withdraw his Amendment. He was not anxious to carry on any obstruction in that House, nor did he think any of his Colleagues were. [*Laughter.*] He said that in all sincerity, for the obstructive tactics of the past had been forced upon them by the comedy of legislation which had been played in that House by the Government with regard to Ireland. But when the next Election should return 20 or 30 supporters of the hon. Member for Meath, the Tory Party would not always have a brutal majority. [*Cries of* "Order!"]

Mr. SPEAKER said, he was sure the hon. Member himself must see that such an expression was most irregular, and should be withdrawn.

Mr. FINIGAN said, he would at once, with pleasure, withdraw the expression, and substitute the word "sweeping." What he meant to say was that Parties would be more equally balanced in the next Parliament, and that there would be no necessity to practise what was now called obstruction. He hoped, however, that in the next Parliament, when the Liberals changed sides, they would not see obstructive tactics practised by the Lowthers', the Bentincks', and the Cecil Raikes'. His object in addressing the House was chiefly to express the wish that the Resolutions would be agreed to, not as a Standing Order, but as a Sessional Order. The hon. and learned Baronet the Member for Wexford (Sir George Bowyer) had pointed out that the House was not able constitutionally to suspend a Member from his service in the House. He (Mr. Finigan) trusted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would seriously consider that matter, and would not hurry this measure through the House as so many other measures had been hurried through it. He should oppose any such injustice as the House was now endeavouring to force upon the Irish Members.

Sir PATRICK O'BRIEN asked why no such measure as this was brought forward in 1877, when so much was said about British interests being damaged by five, or six, or seven hon. Gentlemen? He had never been an advocate of obstruction, and had severed himself from that section of the Irish Members on the question; but he wished it to be understood that when matters of this important description arose, he could not always refrain from giving his vote. The question of obstruction, so called, arose several Sessions ago, and attempts were then made to deal with it, without effect —that was to say, so far as the view of the Government was concerned. He therefore protested against the Government coming down now, at the end of the existence of the Parliament, and imposing these regulations, merely to make an electioneering cry out of them. The Government brought forward the Resolutions now because they would, within a short time, have to appeal to the country. By bringing forward this question on the eve of a General Election, they were preventing the House from considering great measures required for placing England in an eminent position in the eyes of foreign nations, and all for the sake of going to the country with a cry against the Home Rulers. He protested against the action of the Government, and denied their right to sit upon them by new arrangements. While admitting that any hon. Member who interfered with the Public Business of the country ought to be prevented from doing so, he was yet of opinion that for those who were prepared to oppose obstruction, the field was the place. [*Laughter.*] Hon. Members might laugh; but he believed those who took up obstruction were not the fellows to take up the position to which he alluded. While he admitted that, he protested against the action of the Government. He was prepared to stand by the old lines of the Constitution. He was not there to stand up for obstruction; but this question was not one to be dealt with by an expiring Parliament. As an electioneering cry it was unworthy of a Conservative Government, and he trusted the country would not be misled by the humbugging Resolutions which had been proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

MR. COURTNEY said, that he felt conscious of a difficulty in addressing the House after a long debate; but on the general principles which bore upon the question before the House he felt that there was still a great deal to be said which had not been said either on that night or the night before. He was constrained to say that he was rather alarmed by the singular unanimity which prevailed in the House. It did not appear to be consistent with their duties or independence as Members of that House. There had been a singular unwillingness to look at the real facts of the situation. But he thought that as they were compelled to deal with the facts of the case, they must pay attention to them to qualify them to deal with the question. They were brought face to face with a remarkable phenomenon. There had come into that House certain Members who disdained its traditions, who had no respect for its unwritten laws, who did not observe the morality which had hitherto regulated the conduct of its Members, and who were not amenable to the external influence of electoral opinion. When a man, in former years, had contravened the common sense of the House he very soon got conscious of what he had done, and withdrew from that line of action. But he would bring before them, as the first fact of the existing situation, that there were men among them upon whom no such influence produced any effect, men who did not care a straw about being reprobated by the mass of the House. There was another fact to be remembered. If a man acted in the way he had described there was another power he had to meet—the power of his constituency. If a man offended in that way his constituency would not return him again to Parliament. But they knew that that was not always the fact now. They had not only Members who disregarded the traditions of the House, but constituencies that approved of this contempt on the part of their Representatives. How did they propose to deal with such Members? They proposed to inflict a penalty which would only make them more popular with their constituencies, and which offered them the opportunity of obtaining a cheap sort of martyrdom. It was thought by these Resolutions to cure the evil, without understanding the weakness of the method employed. They had to do with men who disdained the traditions of the House; they had to deal with constituencies which did not blame the conduct of such men. Of this they had

had an instructive example in the history of the last Session. It was a pity the hon. Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell) was not present; the discussions on the Resolutions would have possessed much more vitality if he had been there. In his absence, reference might be permitted to an historic incident. That hon. Gentleman had told them, the very last night they had gone into Committee on the Army Discipline and Regulation Bill last Session, that he was obliged to leave them, inasmuch as he was going to assist in the election at Ennis. The hon. Gentleman went to Ennis and brought back the present Member (Mr. Finigan) as the prize for his conduct on the Army Discipline and Regulation Bill. He would direct the attention of the House to a third point. What, after all, was obstruction? They had been talking for two nights, and he had not yet heard a single Member attempt to define it. It was only a slip-shod answer to say that everybody knew what it was. For a single Member to talk for two nights—was that obstruction? There were a great many slip-shod answers to that question, covering much confusion of thought. The hon. and learned Member for Louth (Mr. Sullivan) had, in his effective speech, quoted cases of repeated Divisions as instances of obstruction. The hon. Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell) had referred to other such cases. He (Mr. Courtney) did not regard many speeches and repeated Divisions as necessarily constituting obstruction, and there were many things which had been called obstruction which were not obstruction at all. It would be dangerous to attempt to define it; but he would say that it did not consist in making many or long speeches, and in taking many Divisions; but it consisted in doing any one of these things, not for the purpose of informing the mind of the House or bringing it to consider the question at issue, or of informing the mind of the country, but for the purpose of preventing the House from dealing with the question before it—simply and solely doing so for the purpose of preventing the Business of the House being done. The hon. Member for Plymouth (Mr. Sampson Lloyd), in his speech on the previous evening, referred to the action of hon. Members on the Irish Church Bill and on the South Africa Bill. The hon. Member seemed to be of opinion that the conduct of hon. Members who opposed the Irish Church Bill did not amount to obstruction, but that in the case of the South Africa Bill there was obstruction, pure and transparent. Well, he (Mr. Courtney) was of exactly the contrary opinion. Why? Because the Irish Church Bill was introduced after its principle had been raised in a previous Parliament, and a General Election had been taken on the issue involved in the question with which it dealt, and because a Parliament had been elected with a view to the Disestablishment of the Irish Church. The principles of the Bill having been thus accepted, there remained nothing to do but to discuss its details; and to go on opposing the Bill simply to prevent its passing was unmistakeable obstruction. If anyone endeavoured to stop a thing only because he did not like it, he was obstructing. But in the case of the South Africa Bill, how totally different was the situation; for when the Bill came before the House there were not 10 Members who knew anything about it, and the country was absolutely ignorant on the subject. Under such circumstances, it was the business of honest men to stir up public opinion both in the House and out of it. He held, therefore, that when the South Africa Bill was first brought in, it was not obstructed, whatever obstruction might have occurred afterwards. In what did obstruction lie? Not, as he had said, in the making of many speeches, nor in the making of speeches of considerable length, but in the motive with which they were made. When trying to ascertain whether obstruction was taking place, they should consider whether a man was endeavouring to stop Business to give expression to his own self-will and obstinacy, or trying really to improve the character of the action of the House by making it more deliberate or more in consonance with the opinion of the country. The House would see how judicial and deliberative should be the temper of the tribunal appointed to determine questions of obstruction. In dealing with this question of obstruction, it had been assumed that they must rely either upon the popular vote or upon the declaration of the Speaker or Chairman of Committees. The popular vote was the ancient, constitutional, recognized method of procedure; but those who understood what it really was would be very slow to assent to its acceptance as a means of meeting obstruction. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in advocating the claims of that mode of procedure, said it was important to have the opinion of those who had seen and known. But was the popular vote the expression of the opinion of those who had seen and known? No, it was nothing of the kind. They were in great danger from obstruction; but they would be in greater danger still were they to accept the popular vote as the test of obstruction. The result in practice would be that when the bells of the House rang hon. Members would flock in from the various rooms of the House where they had dispersed, to decide peremptorily on the conduct of a man whose action, which they had not seen or watched, might, perhaps, be of the most patriotic character—as in the opposition in the first stages of the South African Bill. Should they then be driven to accept the authority of the Speaker? Was that the only alternative? He ventured to think that it would be very injudicious even to expose the Speaker to the odium and difficulty of having to fasten on any particular Member and point to him as having been guilty of obstruction. This course involved the danger of placing the Speaker in an attitude of apparent hostility to a section of the House. And then there was this difficulty—that if they were to invest the Speaker with the authority to which he had referred, they must invest the same power in the Chairman of Committees, and he himself drew an immense difference between the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees. The present Chairman was a staunch Party man, as might be fully seen from his speeches at Chester, but had always preserved an admirable impartiality in the Chair. They could not, however, tell what kind of Chairman they might get in the future; he might be puzzle-headed or incompetent, for the position might be filled by many hon. Gentlemen in the same Sitting. It should also be borne in mind that a Chairman of Committees was generally a strong Party man, so that it would be a dangerous step to give him so vast a power as that of deciding upon the motives of a particular Member; and it should also be remembered that these obstructive measures were chiefly adopted in Committee. Reasoning in this way, he (Mr. Courtney) had been drawn to the conclusion that the best way to meet the difficulties of the case would be the institution of a Committee of Order. The House, as had been said, was jealous of its authority; but, in spite of that jealousy, it had always parted with it in forming an opinion whenever the rights of individuals were concerned; and why should it not do so in this matter too? Private Bills were relegated to Committees upstairs, because they affected the rights of individuals; a similar practice was followed when a question arose as to whether an hon. Member had vacated his seat, and the same course was adopted, under Mr. Grenville's Act, in the case of Election Petitions, in order that private individuals might not be prejudiced by a chance decision of the House. Now, the question of obstruction was a question involving the rights of individuals; and, therefore, following the precedents that existed, they should also refer questions of obstruction to a Select Committee. For that reason, he had suggested that when a Member was supposed to offend his case should be examined by a Committee of Order, who should report to the House. He should not enter into particulars as to the constitution of the Committee he proposed, as they were in print and spoke for themselves. In this way, the feebleness of the penalty of the Resolutions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which everyone had remarked upon, would be got over, for the House would never think by a deliberate vote to sentence a man to only one day's silence. It was because the proposed tribunal was not sufficiently deliberative, authoritative, and final, that the sentence was so feeble. If a question of obstruction were referred to a tribunal that would have the authority of a Select Committee and then reported as a real case of obstruction, the penalty that would follow would surely be greater than one of suspension for one night. Let them make the initial procedure stronger, and they would be able to enforce a stronger penalty. The penalty, he contended, should only involve the silencing, not voting, of a Member, because by speech his offence would originate, and by silencing his speech the offence would be cured. A man for the first time might properly be suspended for a fortnight or a month.

The right hon. Gentleman's proposal appeared also to be open to condemnation in the necessity which it involved of a discussion in the House if a third offence should be perpetrated. Now, the very thing which ought to be avoided, in his opinion, was the provoking of discussions in the House upon such questions. Let the original question be sent to the tribunal of a Committee, and let the Committee determine the guilt or innocence of a Member, and then let the penalty for the offence be inflicted without any discussion at all. In such a course there was a speedy and sufficient remedy. He did not mean, he might add, to move his plan as an Amendment to the Resolutions, because he would rather that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's plan was tried. But he wished to protest against the language he had heard from several hon. Members on his own side of the House against making any alteration at all. They must be feeble indeed if they were to listen to any such advice. They must be terrified indeed at what had happened at Liverpool and elsewhere, if they could not consider such a question of detail as a difference between suspension and speaking. When the House came to consider the details of the plan of the Government free criticism would, he hoped, be applied to it, so that it might receive the Amendment of which he thought it stood in need.

Mr. BIGGAR said, he thought there was a great likelihood that even-handed justice would not be dealt out, under the proposed Resolutions, to all Members alike. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] He did not at all recognize the propriety of those cries, inasmuch as the question under discussion was one of all others on which he had, he thought, a right to speak; for he had been pointed to as being an Obstructionist, although he entirely denied the justice of the imputation. With regard to the duty of a minority, he believed it was to criticize the preposterous conduct of the majority. That was the object they had to serve. The hon. Member for Liskeard (Mr. Courtney) had asserted that whenever an allegation of obstruction was made against an hon. Gentleman it was the conscience or instinct of the House which should form an opinion on the question as to whether there had been really obstruction or not; but, for his part, he (Mr. Biggar) thought if the question was to be determined by the instinct of a number of hon. Members, or even the instinct of the Speaker, they would lose the action of the Irish constituencies at the approaching General Election. Thus the Government were already electioneering on a grand scale, and were doing what was best calculated to arouse the passions of the people of England and turn them in the direction most likely to serve the purposes of the Tory Party. The Resolutions were intended to serve something more than a mere Party cry. They were the offspring of a long-deliberated, long-matured plan, for the execution of which the present was thought the most opportune time. The Resolutions were the machinery of a system which was designed to enable the majority of that House to subject to the indignity of enforced silence and deprivation of legislative functions the Representatives of Ireland who should have the temerity to press, with, what English Members would call, the importunate earnestness which was carried on by hon. Members of the Party of which his hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) was the Leader. Commenting upon their conduct, the newspapers to which he had referred suggested that penal measures should be resorted to. Such newspapers were not acting properly, and he maintained that they had no right to pay any attention to these irresponsible writers. Although no attempt had been made to define obstruction, several instances of alleged obstruction had been cited in the course of the discussion by hon. Gentlemen opposite; but he could only remember two or three cases where there had been special obstruction practised. One was the South African Bill. When that Bill was introduced by the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Colonies, no explanation, so far as he could recollect, was offered by him as to the objects it had in view. It so happened that the hon. Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell) understood the whole question, and, believing it was an objectionable Bill, he opposed it in a most determined manner. The result was that the Government, joined by the front Opposition Bench, came to an understanding that they would force the Bill through the House. What followed? The measure was passed in a slipshod manner, without proper examination, and the consequences were most mischievous.

This country lost several millions of money and a large number of British soldiers. Another Bill on which it was said there was obstruction was the Army Discipline and Regulation Bill, which was discussed at great length. A discussion was raised, chiefly through the efforts of the hon. Member for Meath (Mr. Parnell), on the question of flogging. That question of flogging was debated in Committee on Amendment after Amendment. A great deal of time was consumed; but the result was that the front Opposition Bench made it a Party question, and flogging in the Army was abolished. In these cases of so-called obstruction the public interest was served; and, therefore, it could not properly be called obstruction. He did not profess to give a definition of the word; but he understood it very well. He did not think hon. Members could be fairly charged with obstruction, if they moved to report Progress at a late hour of the night, when hon. Gentlemen were thoroughly tired. It was remarkable that the charge had been brought against hon. Members only for obstruction when the House was in Committee. At such times, he supposed, there was more freedom of discussion and more liability of Members on the Government side to get excited and to bring these charges of obstruction. For himself, he was not annoyed at seeing these stringent Rules being passed, because he thought the day was not far distant when the people of England and Ireland, who had the power of returning Representatives to that House, would turn the tide against many of its present Members. When that day came they would see a far different House of Commons from that they had at present; and hon. Gentlemen opposite, probably, would like to be at liberty themselves to impede the progress of those great reforms which were impending, and which, in accordance with their traditional policy, they might be desirous of opposing. Probably they would some day have a House which might carry a Bill to abolish the House of Lords, and also to abolish Irish, and possibly English, landlords. Then those hon. Gentlemen who now seemed so anxious to make a stringent Rule against Irish Members would be less desirous to see such a Rule carried into effect. He certainly had on many occasions called the attention of the Speaker to the fact that 40 Members were not present; but it was always on public grounds. It was little in accordance with their theories of the conduct of Public Business to see an able Member of the House addressing two or three of his fellow-Members only, and for that reason he had occasionally resorted to the machinery of a count to procure an audience for his hon. Friends. But he had never moved a count for the sake of wasting time. He did not object to the half-past 12 Rule, because it was a very salutary one, and it made it impossible for a Bill to pass without some explanation being given. As for breaches of Order, it was not easy for a private Member to avoid occasionally committing them—the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself had tripped—but he did not remember a single case of the ruling of the Chair being set at defiance; and, therefore, the Resolutions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer were uncalled for and unnecessary. It was the duty of hon. Members to criticize everything which came before the House, and criticism was not obstruction. the hon. and learned Member for Dublin University (Mr. Plunket) had spoken of obstruction; but he (Mr. Biggar) wished to remind the House that the same hon. and learned Member had frequently "talked out" Irish Bills on Wednesday afternoons. The obstruction had been on the part of the Government, and he denied that he or any of his Colleagues had been guilty of it. More time was wasted by the Government in their conduct of Public Business than was wasted by all the Irish Members.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. BIGGAR, in moving an Amendment to the effect that no charge of obstruction should be brought against hon. Members, if after 1 o'clock in the morning they made repeated Motions for adjournment, said, his object in doing so was to enable hon. Members to do so without being liable to a charge of obstruction.

Amendment proposed, in line 1, after the word "whenever," to insert the words "before one o'clock a.m."—(*Mr. Biggar.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. SPEAKER pointed out that the Amendment as it appeared on the Paper referred to "one o'clock p.m." He supposed the hon. Member meant a.m.

Mr. BIGGAR said, it was a mistake of the printer. He intended to use the letters a.m.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, he was unable to agree to the Amendment, on the ground that it would afford universal licence to Members after 1 o'clock. He did not think the Resolution would prevent hon. Gentlemen from moving the adjournment of the House either before or after that hour.

Mr. NEWDEGATE: I wish, Sir, to call the attention of the House to a paragraph which appeared in *The Standard* newspaper of this morning, and which says—"We are informed that in consequence of the receipt of a telegram from Mr. Parnell, Mr. Biggar has resolved" ——[*Cries of* "Order!"]

Mr. SPEAKER: I must point out to the hon. Member that the House is now considering a specific Amendment, and that any observations made should be relevant to that Amendment.

Mr. NEWDEGATE regretted he was not in the House when the Amendment was proposed. It was an Amendment which he thought was not worth a minute's consideration. The House had passed a Standing Order that no opposed Business should be taken after half-past 12 o'clock at night, and the Amendment would invite all kinds of controversy after 1 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. O'DONNELL remarked, that the hon. Gentleman the Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) seemed to have taken up obstruction as his *bête noire, vice* the Jesuits deposed; and the hon. Gentleman, apparently, knew as little about the one subject as he did about the other. The Amendment would undoubtedly give general license after 1 o'clock; but if it was somewhat wide in its scope in that respect, so was that of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and it was for that reason it was proposed. At the same time, he thought that important Business ought not to be taken after that hour.

Mr. COURTNEY did not rise to support the Amendment, but to make an observation on what had fallen from the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He did not apprehend that the new Rule would supersede the old ones. This was a new Rule; but the method of procedure it supplied was simply cumulative on former methods, which would remain intact; and, therefore, it was not correct to say that there would be universal licence after 1 o'clock, if the new Rule then ceased to be operative.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 14; Noes 290: Majority 276.—(Div. List, No. 23.)

Mr. O'DONNELL, in moving an Amendment providing that at least 100 Members of the House should be present during the act relied for to constitute an offence of the character contemplated by the proposed Rule, said, he had no desire to press this Amendment to a division, if he received some satisfactory assurance from the Government on the subject; but he required some assurance from Her Majesty's Ministers that they would themselves provide such Amendments as would make it a matter of comparatively little importance whether it was a large or a small number of hon. Gentlemen who were present during the commission of the alleged offence. In such a manner to proceed with a very small and limited House would simply be to bind over Members and constituents alike to a blind, or rather purblind vote, which would neither, in reality, solve the question at issue nor conduce to the dignity of the House, and which might inflict irreparable wrong upon a man for some alleged offence of which he was really innocent, and on which, if he were guilty, he ought in justice to have a right and fair trial. If, on the other hand, a series of offences took place in a full House, before a large number of witnesses, then whatever might be formally incorrect and improper in the situation in the passing of sentence upon a Member without any previous opportunity of explanation or defence would disappear. But the fact that 80 or 100 Members could speak as to the conduct which had been pursued —[*Interruption*]—with great respect to that hon. House, he ventured to submit that during the present debate, full of such grave consequences to hon. Members themselves, hon. Gentlemen ought not to indulge in private conversation. He had been endeavouring conscientiously to discuss the question before the Chair, and he did not think that up to the present time he had wasted a single moment in that object. He trusted that hon. Gentlemen who were called upon, as they were now, not merely to act in the ordinary capacity of Members of Parliament, but to act somewhat in a judicial capacity, would preserve somewhat of the decorum of the Judicial Bench. He was saying, when interrupted, that if there was a good House, consisting of the number of Members he had named, a good many objections suggested by the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer would disappear in practice. In such a case, an hon. Member could fairly trust his case to the judgment of those who had been the witnesses of his conduct during the evening; but if they were only to have a handful of hon. Gentlemen—if there was to be no explanation or discussion, and if hon. Members were to be called up from the Smoking Room, the Library, St. Stephen's Club, and other places, to vote about what they knew nothing, it was absolutely necessary to provide some precaution against the exercise of any such arbitrary power. It was all very well to say that the House of Commons was omnipotent and could do everything. But though the House of Commons could do everything, it did not follow that the House should do anything without discrimination.

Amendment proposed, in line 1, after the word "Member," to insert the words "at least one hundred Members being present."—(*Mr. O'Donnell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, that the object of the Resolution was to enable the Speaker or the Chairman to enforce his decision as to the orderly or disorderly conduct of any Member, and he did not think it would be possible to limit that power in the way suggested by the hon. Member. If the power was one which ought to be given at all, it was one which ought to be exercised when the House was complete for Public Business—that was to say, when there were 40 Members present. Without, therefore, entering into the other questions which the hon. Gentleman raised, and which could be discussed on other Amendments, he had only to say he could not assent to the one now proposed.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY said, in answering the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that no power was conferred on the Speaker by the Amendment, and, therefore, no power was taken away by its adoption. He would suggest that no vote should be taken unless 40 Members were present when the Speaker named the offending Member. It was well known that when the division bell rang many hon. Members from the Library and elsewhere always flocked in, and, in cases of this kind, would vote as to an offence which they were supposed to have witnessed, but of which they knew actually nothing.

MR. SYNAN said, there were three ways of getting out of the difficulty—leaving the matter altogether in the hands of the Speaker; next, shutting and locking the door when a Member was named, and allowing no Member to enter until a vote had been taken; and, thirdly, allowing the Member to defend himself before the House pronounced judgment.

MR. SHAW trusted that the Government would make a concession on the point under discussion. The whole thing was an experiment, and it should have a fair trial. It was very undesirable that hon. Members who knew nothing of a particular case should yet be allowed to pronounce judgment upon it; and he would, therefore, prefer that the whole responsibility should be left with the Speaker.

MR. NEWDEGATE said, that the Resolution of which he had given Notice was in accordance with the practice of that House, which had always been that no Member should be suspended from his functions unless, after due notice, the House came to a decision upon his case. He did feel that this Resolution was casting upon the Speaker an invidious and summary jurisdiction; and unless that jurisdiction were supported by the House upon a division the position of the Speaker would be intolerable. He must beg the House to forgive him for urging that this Resolution was a departure from its practice of many hundreds of years, during which it had never allowed the Privileges of the meanest of its Members, or the Representatives of the meanest of its constituencies, to be interfered with without passing deliberate judgment on the question.

MAJOR O'GORMAN rose to Order. What did the hon. Member mean by mean constituencies? Did he refer to North Warwickshire?

MR. NEWDEGATE said, that his words were intended to support the argument of the hon. Member for Dungarvan. He said that the House would not allow the meanest of its Members, or the Representatives of the meanest of its constituencies——

Major O'Gorman: Exactly. I rise to Order again. Sir, I maintain there is no such thing known to the Constitution as a mean constituency.

Mr. NEWDEGATE said, that he was endeavouring to urge that by the practice of this House no Member, or the Representative of no constituency——[Major O'Gorman: Bravo!]—was interfered with in the exercise of his Privileges until found guilty by the House after due deliberation. He humbly conceived that he was putting the case urged by the hon. Member for Dungarvan in the strongest manner he could. He did think that the proceedings suggested by the Notice of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer was a means of exercising a very summary jurisdiction, and constituted an arbitrary interference with the rights not only of Members of this House, but of their constituents also, which was not adequately protected by the very slight remedy which was added. Because he felt that it was an interference with the privileges of hon. Members, he should object to the words "or otherwise." He thought that the adoption of those words would be inflicting penalties infinitely more severe than the nature of the case demanded. He did not think that any measure of expulsion should be sanctioned by the House which superseded the long standing privileges of Members to have their cases heard and determined by the House after due notice. He trusted the House would forgive him for urging upon it that, if he rightly understood the words of the Resolution, it cast the duty of acting judicially and after notice in the infliction of penalties upon hon. Members upon the Chair, without the Member in question having notice. They were asked, therefore, to curtail the judicial action of the House always exercised after due notice, and to put the power of condemnation and of inflicting penalties, which might be for the gravest offences, upon the Chair, supported by a division taken immediately and without notice. It seemed to him that there would be two manifest defects in this Resolution; and he could not think that the House would be acting wisely in extending the purview of this Resolution to undefined offences which the words "or otherwise" would cover. In his opinion, it would be quite sufficient to limit the Resolution to the offence of obstruction.

Mr. FINIGAN said, that if the Amendment of the hon. Member for Dungarvan did not meet with the acceptance of the House three alternative propositions had been placed before it, and would, he hoped, receive the serious consideration of the House. He hoped that the House would very carefully consider the principles of the Amendment then before it. It would, indeed, be a sorry spectacle for the British House of Commons to present to the strangers in the Galleries, or to the Press over the Speaker's Chair, to put upon them the duty of recording that a Member had been suspended from the Privileges of the House because he had—perhaps through too fine a sense of duty—been led into what might be judged by the Chair to be an act of obstruction. It would be much worse if that occurred in a small House which should be called upon to judge the case. Hon. Members would be hurried into the House without having heard the previous parts of the debate, or without having witnessed or, perhaps, he might even go so far as to say, without being willing to witness, or willing to listen to, any of the remarks which constituted the alleged obstructive conduct of the offending Member. He thought that it would be in derogation of the spirit of British or English fair play for the House to condemn any Member without giving him an opportunity of explanation, or without giving the House itself a legitimate opportunity of forming a sound and fair judgment as to whether the Member was guilty of the alleged offence or not. Hon. Members upon that side of the House, and particularly the hon. Members with whom he was connected, would not allow any cries of "Divide, divide!" or other interruptions to interfere between them and their duty. He hoped that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer would make some compromise based on justice and in the spirit of fair play with those who differed from him on the subject of these Resolutions. He was quite sure that the hon. Member for Dungarvan would accept that compromise; and it would show the House, and would show not only to England but to Ireland, against which this particular measure of legislation was aimed, that, at all events, if any of its Representatives did err, they would not be judged in an unjust or unfair manner. He trusted that the right hon. Gentleman would see his way to make some compromise.

SIR JOSEPH M'KENNA said, that he rose for the purpose of expressing a hope that the Government would accept the proposition of his hon. Friend the Member for Limerick (Mr. O'Shaughnessy) that there should be at least a quorum—that was, 40 Members—present when the House was summoned to decide upon any case. What did that proposition involve? It only involved the necessity of a quorum of Members being kept in the House by whoever was in charge of the Business of the House. It seemed to him that that was a very simple requirement, and that it would be a very proper one to accede to. He did not think that they ought to sit there and quietly allow these Resolutions to be passed without any guarantee that there might not be more than four or five Members present when questions of this character were decided. It would be so easy to prevent that happening by the adoption of the Amendment proposed that he hesitated to believe that the concession would be withheld. That was the first occasion on which he had spoken during the course of the debate, and he had hoped that it would have concluded without his having to do so. He should have wished that the matter had been presented to the House in a less objectionable form. It appeared to him that there was a great principle involved in the question. During the present Session he had heard the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Cambridgeshire (Mr. Rodwell) make a speech, under circumstances which seemed to him to be an illustration of the argument he was offering to the House. That hon. and learned Member was speaking to a House composed of Mr. Speaker and two other hon. Members. What judgment could hon. Members come to upon what had been going on in the House in a case such as he mentioned, when they were only summoned to it by the division bell? Ought not those Members to have been present who were to sit in judgment? It did seem to him that the proposal of the hon. Member for Limerick was a proper one, and that it was only right that on an occasion so solemn as that of depriving a Member of his privileges and his constituents of his vote, and, therefore, of their franchise, that a quorum of the House should be present, and that that quorum should have witnessed what had occurred. He trusted that there might be no counting into Lobbies on this occasion, for the greater the amount of spontaneous concession by the Government in framing this Rule the better would it be received by the country, and the better would it act in the long run.

MR. H. SAMUELSON said, that in discussing the Resolution he could not be accused of obstructing Public Business, for the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had promised that every opportunity should be given to hon. Members to consider the Resolution. With the greatest deference to the House, he said it had no idea what kind of obstruction that Resolution was directed against. He wished to state one reason why he thought the Amendment should not be put to the House; but, at the same time, he did think there was so much in the observations that had fallen from Irish Members as to the injustice liable to be put upon a Member, if the Resolution was carried as it stood, that he would add his entreaty to the Government not to put the matter entirely into the hands of the majority of the House. As had been said, the occasions when the Resolution would be put in force would be very solemn ones, and such as would require the attendance of a quorum. It was impossible to lay down any rule as to the presence of Members. When an occurrence of this kind might happen at any moment and without warning it would be absurd to insist that a quorum of the House should always be present, or otherwise, that the Speaker should not be able of his own Motion to enforce Order in the Assembly. He believed that to every Member of the House the decision of the Speaker would carry perfect satisfaction at all times, and that if in the exercise of his discretion the Speaker were to put in force the Resolution, there would be no dissatisfaction on any side. On the other hand, if the decision rested with the majority of the House there would be considerable dissatisfaction, and a feeling might arise that Members had been unjustly treated by their political opponents. It would be said, as well outside the House as in, that hon. Members were hurried up without having heard the occurrence that had given rise to the Motion, and without knowing anything of the merits of the case, to give their vote against a particular individual. It must be remembered that the Resolution might affect those who acted entirely from conscientious motives; and it was not against such he was sure that the Government wished to proceed. It seemed to him the simple way out of the difficulty was to place in the hands of the Speaker, in whom they all had absolute confidence, the decision as to whether a Member had been guilty of obstruction or not.

Mr. BIGGAR said, that some hon. Members had stated that Irish Members, of whom he was one, did not care in the least for the decisions of that House. When he became a Member of that House, six years ago, he knew nothing of the decisions of that House; but he had since had considerable experience with regard to them. He should be disposed to think that if the decisions of the House were to be given by hon. Members who knew nothing whatever of the circumstances of the case upon which they were voting that they would not merit any consideration at his hands. Yet that would be the position of the matter if the Resolution were agreed to, for the conduct of hon. Members would be at the mercy of a majority who knew nothing whatever of the matter.

Mr. P. MARTIN said, that he was amongst those hon. Members who considered that nothing could be more injurious to the interests of Ireland than obstruction in the sense of a personal waste of the time of the House by the discussion of irrelevant matters. But, to be effective, a Resolution of the present character ought to be considered as fair and impartial. But if the terms of this Resolution were to be forced on the House by the Government it would not be so considered by the people of Ireland. As the Resolution stood, the punishment intended to be inflicted by the Resolution was placed in the hands of a majority, who might use the Resolution as a means of Party spite. Under those circumstances, he asked the House why they had not heard from the Treasury Bench one single word of answer to the forcible remonstrances of the hon. Member for Limerick (Mr. O'Shaughnessy) and others? He could not understand why an answer had not been given to the grave objections which had been offered to the Resolution in its present shape. The Resolution was not only utterly contrary to all Parliamentary precedent, but was conceived in a spirit which was quite foreign to the English law. A Member accused was not to be allowed an opportunity of vindicating himself from the charges made against him. What was the proud boast of British law, but that no man should be condemned unheard. But now the honour and privileges of a Member of that House were to be subjected to deprivation at the hands of Gentlemen who might not be present or know anything at all as to the matter in controversy or nature of the offence which they were to punish by their votes. He did not know whether anyone had taken the trouble to read the terms of the Resolution; but it seemed to him to go far beyond any question of obstruction. A Member might be subjected to the punishment provided by the Resolution, not only for abusing the Forms of the House by what was called obstruction, but for any other offence, as indicated by the words "or otherwise." Therefore, if in the heat of debate, or in the excitement of argument, an hon. Member were taunted by the other side, and was tempted into any slight abuse or transgression of the ordinary Rules of debate, he might be subjected to this punishment. It might be urged that the Speaker stood, to a certain extent, as a protector of the hon. Members; but if the Speaker was to protect hon. Members, why not invest the slight power in him? He could thoroughly well understand the proposition that an absolute power of this kind was to be vested in the Speaker. But the provisions of this Resolution seemed to him to be a sham. If the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees was to name an hon. Member, then Members were to be summoned from different parts of the House, and from half-a-dozen clubs, to vote upon a question as to which they knew nothing. What were hon. Members to do under those circumstances? If they knew nothing whatever about the circumstances of the case, it would obviously be their duty to record their vote in support of the Chair; and, moreover, it would also be the duty of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to move a Resolution in support of the authority of the Chair. As he understood, from observations made upon the other side of the House, it was not the intention to punish a mere inadvertent transgression; but it was desired to punish organized obstruction, which had for its object the destruction of the authority of that House, and bringing it into disrepute. But the Government was not satisfied with vesting authority in the Speaker; they went further, and said that they required something more—namely, a vote of the House in aid of the Speaker. Had they not sufficient confidence in the Speaker to give him the sole control and authority in this matter? Did they believe that the Speaker would not temperately and wisely exercise the discretion vested in him? He did not understand how an honourable man could reconcile it to his conscience to say that a Member of the House had been guilty of a Parliamentary offence, when he knew nothing about it. Was that the way in which in an ordinary Constitutional manner the laws of England were enforced against a person? Was it ever the custom that a person could be condemned unheard? He would refer to the ordinary rules which governed trial by jury. No one ever heard that juries should be allowed to decide without having heard any portion of the trial or any part of the evidence. He did not see any reason why a Member of that House should be placed in a worse position with regard to his privileges than an ordinary criminal was when accused of the vilest offences. He had listened with the greatest possible attention to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer in introducing this Resolution, and he made use of the words "that the Members who were present would have the decision upon the question." But he had gone over the Resolution very carefully, and it was plain the powers of suspension was not confined to the Members who were present. Under those circumstances, he could look upon the Resolution as nothing but a sham provision, which professed, but really did not give, fair play to hon. Members accused of obstruction.

LORD JOHN MANNERS said, that as to the complaint that the Government had made no answer to the speeches, they seemed to him to have travelled very wide of the subject; and as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had already given the reply of the Government when the Amendment was moved, he did not think they could fairly be blamed for not embarking on the very wide field which had been travelled over, especially as the principle of the Resolution had been accepted. The Amendment, that 100 Members must be present before the Speaker could name any individual Member, anyone must see would destroy the effect of the whole Resolution; but hon. Members who did support this important contention maintained that, if this was not accepted, then another Amendment lower down on the Paper might be worthy of support; but surely they were not to be called upon to argue upon suppositious Amendments, and the House could not complain if the Government discussed each Amendment as it came up. Hon. Members spoke as if the authority of the Speaker must be regarded as altered; but, practically, the effect of the Resolution was that after the Speaker had named a Member as guilty of this particular offence the House would be summoned to come to a decision as to the penalty to follow. He was taunted with the fact that this was a Resolution of the Government—and, no doubt, it was; but why did they propose it? Because it was in principle the Resolution suggested by the Select Committee which sat in the year 1878. The principle of this Amendment was discussed at great length on the previous evening. In the discussion of that afternoon, he did not think he had heard any further arguments which would be sufficient to induce the Government to depart from the Motion which they had submitted to the House. The only reason why the authority of the House was called in after Mr. Speaker had declared a Member guilty of obstruction was to carry out the old Constitutional principle that the Speaker was the organ, and not the dictator, of the House; to clothe the decision he had already given with the further sanction of the House, and to bring upon the offending Member, in the most formal manner possible, the decision of the Speaker and the House.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON said, that if the Government had permanently made up their minds they could not entertain the suggestion, made with great unanimity from both sides of the House, that all power should be placed in the hands of the Speaker without intervention or the vote of the House, then he must, of course, admit that there was very little use in the prolongation of this discussion. The noble Lord, however, had not taken that ground; he had invited them to discuss the question, not upon this Amendment, but upon a subsequent one. But the noble Lord and the Government must see that, if there was any intention of acceding to the almost unanimous expression of opinion that had come from both sides of the House, a great deal of time could be saved by making the announcement at that moment, and taking away the whole force of the arguments which were used to support the present Amendment. He certainly himself could not support the Amendment now moved, nor any modification of it, because if he did that it would be to appear to admit that any amount of obstruction or opposition to the Rules of the House might take place when less than 40 or less than 100 Members were present. Unless, indeed, they were prepared altogether to re-consider their Rules, and to insist that a quorum of Members must always be present in the House, this Amendment must be regarded as almost an absurdity. He must, however, at the same time, point out that all the force of any arguments used in support of this Amendment were derived from the mistake, if not, indeed, the injustice, of asking a number of Members to decide on a question of which they could have no possible knowledge. It would, therefore, be an exceedingly good thing for the Government to inform the House whether they had arrived at their irrevocable decision on this point. The noble Lord who had just sat down had said that the arguments had been sufficiently answered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He would point out, in reply to that, that the only answer that had been given was that just offered by the noble Lord to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because every Member that had addressed the House, not upon one side only, but upon both sides, had supported the position which he had suggested to them. The noble Lord had laid some stress upon the fact that this Motion was the Resolution of a proposition of the Select Committee. He did not himself wish to revive arguments which had been stated before to the House; but it was really very difficult to avoid doing so, when they were absolutely ignored by the noble Lord. He himself pointed out, on the previous evening, that this Resolution was not the Resolution suggested by the Select Committee, because from it had been omitted the very important proposition that the Member should be allowed to be heard in his own defence. That made a very considerable difference in the Motion. He did not want to go over his arguments in detail; but, still, he must draw the noble Lord's attention to that correction, because really this was something which had been omitted.

The O'DONOGHUE said, that when the noble Lord the Postmaster General objected to additional power being placed in the hands of the Speaker, on the ground that such a step would be a departure from the ancient usages of the House, his argument could have very little weight when it was known that this trust itself was the greatest violation that had ever been known of the ancient Forms of Parliament. He could not but express his gratification at finding himself, on the first occasion for many years, able thoroughly to agree with the hon. Gentleman the Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate). Though he had often differed from that hon. Member, he would venture to say to him—though he had never doubted that his course had always been actuated by a strict regard for principle—that his opinion on that point had certainly been confirmed that evening. There could not be the smallest doubt that his hon. Friend was perfectly right in contending that the Government had not been able to put forward one single argument in favour of the course they proposed to take, and that they were simply relying upon the strength of their majority to force this Resolution on an unwilling House. He was anxious to give them time for the consideration of this whole question, in order that they might debate it amongst themselves fairly and fully, and, with that view, he would move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. CALLAN seconded the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*The O'Donoghue.*)

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER hoped the House would not consent to the Motion for adjournment, although he was not sorry that it had been proposed, because it gave him an opportunity of saying a few words which otherwise he would not be able to address to the House. The noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition had remarked that the Government had been supported by nobody except by his noble Friend the Postmaster General in support of that particular proposition. It might be that little had been said in support of it; but that was due, he believed, to the fact that a great number of Gentlemen had been anxious to avoid discussing a question on which they would be disposed to support the Government, and were desirous not to take up time with a lengthened debate. With regard to the course of the Government in this matter, however, at an earlier period that evening, when the House was not so full as now, he went at some length into the course which they thought it necessary to offer to the proposition they now made. What he then pointed out was that, in the first place, it was a mistake to suppose that the proposition was that Members of the House should be called upon to judge whether a Member had or had not been guilty of a Breach of Order. That was a matter which was already decided for them by the action of the Speaker or the Chairman. The Speaker or the Chairman judged according to what he saw of the hon. Member's conduct; whether he was or was not so far out of Order, and so far irreclaimable by advice from the Chair, that it was necessary to proceed to the step of naming him. Therefore, so far as that point went, the matter was left where hon. Gentlemen wished it to be left, and said it ought to be left —in the discretion of the Chairman, who was cognizant of all that went on, and whose impartiality they all admitted. But then came the question as to the proceedings upon that action of the Chair. Well, it might be said that those who came in voted upon the strength of the decision of the Chairman or the Speaker which they had been informed of. It was, he believed, the hon. and learned Member for Kilkenny (Mr. P. Martin) who said he should think it his duty if he came in, not knowing the real facts of the case, to support the Chair. But everybody would at least know that a case had arisen in which the Speaker felt it necessary to name a Member as out of Order. It would then be a question whether they should take the step of sentencing the Member so named to a suspension for the Sitting. But it was argued that there could be no use in bringing this action before the House at all. It was said—"What is the use of it? Why, if you really trust to the Speaker, should you not leave it to the Speaker nominally, as well as substantially and really, to end the matter?" Earlier in the debate, in answer to that objection, he had urged that though they had only to deal with the question of obstruction in the House and the Speaker in the Chair there might be very little ground for the proceedings proposed. They had, however, to deal with a much more delicate question—namely, the question of obstruction in Committee. It had been well pointed out by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Greenwich that they had to consider, not only the case when the official Chairman of Committees was in the Chair, but also the case which sometimes happened in which other Gentlemen who were not ordinarily accustomed to the Office of Chairman were placed in the Chair for a short time during the absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means. When that happened, they had undoubtedly in the Chair a Gentleman in whose impartiality and in whose authority and thorough knowledge of the Rules and conduct of the House they had every confidence, but yet who did not occupy the same independent and impartial position that Mr. Speaker did. Whenever the House was in complete Session, even the official Chairman of Committees was a Member of the House, of one side of the House or the other, and taking part in the political controversy which went on. His position was, therefore, one which was necessarily more difficult than that of the Speaker, who was removed from, and occupied a position apart from and above, the Party divisions and struggles of the House. They had to consider, not only what would be the effect of this Resolution in the House, but what would be its effect on any proceedings taken under it outside the House amongst the constituencies. If, for instance, it was capable of being represented abroad amongst the constituencies and the country at large that such and such a Member had been put to silence by the single action of a Gentleman who was his political opponent, and happened for a moment to be occupying the position of Chairman, an invidious question might be raised. Ought not then the House to act for itself, and so to stop the action of the Chairman, and take upon itself as a body the responsibility of the action of suspending an offending Member? That seemed to him a fairly reasonable contention, and a ground of argument on which the House might venture to adopt this Resolution. He did not desire, and they none of them desired, to question in any way the authority of Mr. Speaker; but they believed they were making an arrangement which would support and assist him, instead of embarrassing him in the discharge of his duties, by a Resolution which certainly was not open to the sort of comment of which he had spoken. He hoped the House would not think of bringing this discussion to a close, but would proceed in carrying to a conclusion the present discussion of these Amendments. The particular one now before the House was one he thought which it would be found quite impossible to entertain on the simple grounds which had been alluded to by his noble Friend, the extreme difficulty of always securing the attendance of a quorum.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT quite agreed with the recommendation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and hoped the Motion for adjournment would not be pressed. At the same time, he felt bound to confess that the arguments that had been used by the Leader of the House, instead of improving the case for the Resolution of the Government, seemed to him to have made it weaker than it ever was before. His noble Friend the Leader of the Opposition had remarked upon a circumstance which must have attracted the attention of everybody present—that during this debate there had not been a single Member who had spoken on either side of the House who had not urged the Government to re-consider their determination to ask for a vote of the House. That had been pressed upon them most strongly. The Opposition, of course, might entertain an opinion in favour of the alteration of the Resolution in that respect; but they had not put the Amendment on the Paper for a reason which he would frankly disclose to hon. Gentlemen opposite, and which was, that they felt that such an Amendment, coming from that side of the House, might have the effect of embarrassing the Government, and have made it difficult for them to accept such an alteration. They thought, therefore, that it was far better that this thing should come to the Government in the form of a suggestion than in the shape of a hostile Amendment, which might have the appearance of taking out of their hands that conduct of Business which really belonged to them. What, however, was the argument which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had now addressed to the House in support of this particular part of the Motion? He had said that if it were only a question of the action of the Speaker in the House he would have been willing to consent to the change suggested; but it was a different thing when they came to deal with the action of the House in Committee. Let them take that argument by steps. The Chancellor of the Exchequer concurred in what was clearly the main consideration, the action of the House—that, as a whole, the argument was in favour of the Speaker acting alone.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: I did not say that. I did not say the argument was in favour of the Speaker acting alone. I said it was a matter of indifference.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT replied, that if it were a matter of indifference the argument was made so much the stronger. The objection taken to these proceedings was that for the first time they were giving to the Speaker an original authority as against Members of the House. That, of course, was perfectly true, as a technical argument; but what was now proposed, or rather what the Government suggested to them they should do, was really no better than that, and he could illustrate his meaning very easily by reminding the House of a very common practice. They knew there were many things which the Crown had no right to do. For instance, the Crown could not create a penal code or authorize criminal procedure against any criminal; but it was a matter of notoriety that the Crown, by Order in Council, issued orders that were penal codes, as, for instance, under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act, the Crown created statutory crimes. But the Crown did not act in that way under its original authority. It acted under a delegated authority which the statute had given it, and from which statute it derived its power. Now, that was exactly what they suggested for the Government that the Speaker should do under this Standing Order. He would not act against a Member out of his original authority; but he would act out of the delegated authority created by the Standing Order, and, therefore, anything he did would, practically, be the act of the House, although it would be, of course, the act of the House in a general way, and not its action taken upon a particular individual case. Do not let hon. Members be under any misapprehension on this subject, or imagine that the House was parting with its authority. It was, on the contrary, losing its authority, but delegated the exercise of it to the Speaker. With regard to the action of the Speaker in the House, he now understood the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that it was a matter of indifference whether the Speaker himself acted in regard to a Member, or whether a vote of the House were also taken. But if that was so they got rid of the difficulties, the many difficulties which everybody felt, in the way of asking a body like the House of Commons to decide upon a matter of which it knew nothing. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said—"Oh, it is a matter of indifference, and we might have conceded this if it was not for the question of Committee; but inasmuch as the person who may preside in Committee will not have the same authority as Mr. Speaker, it is necessary to strengthen him in the eyes of the country and of the constituencies by a decision of this character." But he did not ask the House to consider how a decision such as this proposed would strengthen this proceeding in the eyes of the country. They might have either the regular Chairman of Committees in the Chair, or an occasional Chairman of Committees; but in any case there would be a person who had been a witness of the transaction, and a person who had some knowledge of what had occurred and of what constituted some Breach of the Rules of the House. The Chancellor of the Exchequer urged that the opinion of this Gentleman would, if confirmed by a vote of the House, induce confidence in the justice and wisdom of the decision. That, in fact, was to say that the vote of persons who had heard nothing whatever about the facts on which the decision was based were persons who would, by their vote, make the country satisfied with a decision which the country would not accept as coming from the Chairman of Committees. A more illogical or unreasonable defence of a proposition he had certainly never heard. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had conceded that if this Motion were to be confined to action in the House he would consent to leave the whole matter in the hands of Mr. Speaker; but as regarded the regular or the occasional Chairman of Committees, their decisions would require to be supported by the vote of the House. It came to this, therefore—that they could not trust the regular Chairman of Committees, or the Gentleman who was temporarily occupying his place, and who knew all the circumstances of the case; but they would trust a majority summoned into the House on a sudden, with no knowledge of the facts, who were as partizan, and probably a great deal more partizan, than any Chairman of Committees. Let the House again consider what would practically occur. The Chairman of Committees would make up his mind that a Breach of Order had been committed, and that attention must be called to it. What was to happen then? "The Chairman of Committees," said the Motion—

> "Shall, on a Motion being made, put the same question in a similar way, and if the Motion is carried, shall forthwith suspend the proceedings of the Committee and report the circumstance to the House, and the Speaker shall, thereupon, put the Question."

Thus the Chairman of Committees was not to be trusted by the House, but was to summon the Speaker, who knew nothing about the transaction, and who had not even been in the House; and the Speaker was again to put the Question to the House as to the suspension of a Member for conduct of which he knew nothing at all, and the decision was to rest with a body of Gentlemen, the greater part of whom were not acquainted with the matter on which they were giving a vote; and this was the transaction which was to give confidence to the nation in the justice of a proceeding which they would not trust, if the action were taken by the Chairman of Committees on his own responsibility. For his part, he could not help thinking that such an action would have a flavour of injustice about it, which would do much to destroy its authority in the country. If the House would consent to trust the officers whom it had appointed to conduct its Business to rely upon their discretion in matters of Order, and would ask the nation whom they represented also to trust their discretion in such matters, he thought they had a reasonable chance of succeeding. But if they took the argument of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the Chairman of Committees, or his substitute, were not to be trusted, how could they ask the country to have confidence in the decision of a haphazard majority, summoned by a division bell to determine a matter on which they knew nothing, and which they did not understand? He had himself so strong an opinion on this subject that nothing would ever deter him from putting the Amendment on the Paper except the consideration to which he had already referred. Such a course might have made the acceptance of the Amendment very difficult for the Government. They might have replied to him,—"You are taking the business out of our hands, and we cannot, therefore, accept it." But he had heard so many Gentlemen, even on the other side of the House, supporting the view he was now pressing upon the Government, that if, in any form less objectionable and less obnoxious than the Amendment coming from the Opposition, they could be induced to re-consider their determination, he should himself be very glad of the result. Of course, if the Government would not fall into the suggestion he was now offering, certainly in no hostile spirit, they could not help themselves. After all, the Government had the responsibility. The Opposition, however, would fail altogether in their duty, if they did not point out to the House what really seemed to be a weakness in the Resolutions. Let it be remembered that this was a vote by a number of Gentlemen summoned into the House to vote "Aye" or "No" against an individual of whose conduct they knew nothing. There was, it must be remembered, no statement either from the Speaker or from the Chairman of Committees as to what had occurred. Hon. Members would hear neither the accusation nor the defence. The Government simply had to give a vote, which, if anything at all, was merely a Ministerial act, and which, consequently, would carry with it no additional force or conviction. Under these circumstances, he did deeply regret that the Chancellor of the Exchequer intended to press a proposition, which, as regarded the main branch of the question, he was not prepared to defend, simply on account of an objection which seemed to have occurred to him as to the proceedings in Committee, an objection which certainly ought not to govern a decision on so important a matter.

Mr. GORST said, it had been supposed that hon. Members near him had not spoken because the Government had no supporters on that side of the House. But the fact was that so much time had been taken up by the warm supporters of the Government, who, sitting upon the Bench opposite, had afforded their support by such lengthened criticisms on every part of the Government Resolution, that those who sat on the opposite side, and who were disposed to support Her Majesty's Government, had almost been compelled to remain silent for lack of time to get in a word edgeways. When, however, it was stated by the hon. and learned Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt) that there was no one on the Conservative side of the House who approved of the Resolution which the Government had brought forward, he thought he might ask the House to allow him to state the reason why he and a great number of others were prepared to support that Resolution. As he understood it, the judgment in the case of a recalcitrant Member was to be given by Mr. Speaker, or by the Chairman of Committees, and that when Mr. Speaker or the Chairman of Committees had decided that an hon. Member was obstructing the Business of the House the hon. Member so offending was suspended; the part of the House being to carry that judgment into execution. Under these circumstances, the execution would be the execution of the House, even though it followed the voice of Mr. Speaker. That was what had been said by the hon. and learned Member for Oxford, when he quoted the example of the Crown carrying out the powers conferred upon it by Act of Parliament of passing Orders in Council. Now, as whenever a Member might be silenced by the orders of Mr. Speaker, the common report and vulgar statement would be that "Mr. A. B. had been silenced," it was for that reason most important to keep before the eyes of the country and of the House that it was not Mr. Speaker, but the House itself, which silenced him. That was what he understood the Government intention to be, and he should vote for the Government Resolution, not because they were in a majority—for during the time he had sat in the House of Commons he had always expressed his independent opinion—but because on that occasion he believed Her Majesty's Government were entirely in the right. Again, he should vote for it because he thought that the particular course which Her Majesty's Government had taken would impress upon the country, whenever this Resolution had to be put in actual force, that it was neither Mr. Speaker nor the Chairman of Committees, but the House itself which, upon the judgment of Mr. Speaker or the Chairman of Committees, sentenced a recalcitrant Member to suspension. He believed that in the few words which he had addressed to the House he had expressed the opinion of scores of hon. Members who were sitting silent on that side of the House, although they were as capable of taking part in this discussion as the hon. Member for Cavan, and were quite as warm supporters of the Government as the hon. and learned Member for Oxford, who had taken up so much of the time of the House in criticizing the Government Resolution. He hoped, therefore, that hon. Members on his side of the House would not be again told by the hon. and learned Member for Oxford, or by the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition, that nobody on those Benches agreed with Her Majesty's Government.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN had also remained silent during the discussion for very much the same reason which had been put forward by the hon. and learned Member for Chatham (Mr. Gorst), having thought he could better assist the Government by allowing the discussion—which, in his opinion, would lead to a foregone conclusion—to proceed. The view which he entertained upon the question under consideration had been expressed by the noble Lord the Member for the Radnor Boroughs (the Marquess of Hartington); but silence on his side of the House was just as likely to be misconstrued as silence on the other side of the House. If the views of the hon. and learned Member for Chatham were correct, the Opposition would not be entitled to make any suggestions at all in a case of this kind; but he entirely differed from the arguments of the hon. and learned Gentleman, and did not think that the judgment of that House—a judgment probably confirmed by a Party majority—would carry as much weight in the country as the judgment of a Gentleman occupying the high and impartial position of Speaker. He could not help thinking that the Resolution, as it stood, was rather calculated to minimize the effect of the censure intended to be pronounced on an offending Member. What was likely to happen? Mr. Speaker would pronounce a certain Member to have offended, and then the House would be called upon to pronounce an opinion, and could proceed to execute the judgment of Mr. Speaker—that was what the hon. and learned Member for Chatham had stated. But he could conceive that the Party to which the offending Member belonged might find it necessary to support him, and in that case the decision of the Speaker would be confirmed only by a Party majority, which confirmation would, in his opinion, carry with it not one-half of the weight which would be carried by the censure of Mr. Speaker himself. Again, take the case of the condemnation of an hon. Member by the Chairman of Committees. In this case the House would be called upon in a judicial capacity to decide in place of the Chairman of Committees, who might possibly be a partizan, whether or not such Member had been unjustly condemned. It appeared to him that such a decision would practically carry with it no weight at all. Upon the whole question, he ventured to make a respectful appeal to the Government to give way upon the point. He did not think that the Government could complain of the way in which they had been met on this Resolution; there had been suggestions and criticisms. But he did not know why the Opposition were present in the House of Commons if they were not to be allowed to criticize respectfully the measures as to the Rules of the House which the Government might bring forward. But there had been an almost unanimous expression of opinion on the part of the House that an evil had been found to exist, and that a remedy must be applied to it; there had also been a desire on the part of the House to give full consideration to the proposal of the Government. If the Government would accept the suggestion of the noble Lord the leader of the Opposition, which had been supported on both sides of the House, they would have practically a unanimous concurrence with their Resolution, which he ventured to say would have a greater weight than such a Resolution as they could no doubt force upon the House by the power of a Party majority. If, however, they preferred to treat this as a Party question; if they refused to meet the Opposition in the spirit in which the Opposition had endeavoured to meet the Government, and carried the Resolution by a Party majority, he could only hope that his hon. Friends around him would throw the whole of the responsibility upon Her Majesty's Government, and allow them to take the Resolution as it stood. That course would, in his opinion, conduct to the dignity of the House; and if the Resolution failed to gain the unanimous support of the House of Commons, the responsibility would rest upon the Government and not upon the Opposition. He reminded hon. Members that there had been imputed to certain sections of the House a desire to support obstruction, and to defeat any proposal of the Government to deal with it. He did not believe that any such intention or desire had ever existed on his side of the House; and, speaking for himself at all events, he called hon. Members to witness that from the first, whenever he had had occasion to speak in that House, he had protested against anything in the shape of obstruction with ulterior motives. His idea of the definition of obstruction was that it was not obstruction to any particular measure, but that it was obstruction to a particular measure with some ulterior motive. He was, perhaps, more anxious than some hon. Members opposite to preserve the liberties of minorities in that House; but he was opposed to obstruction in the sense which he had described, and this he believed was the opinion of almost the whole of the House. That being so, he thought they could best defeat the intention of those who seemed desirous of fixing upon the Opposition a connection with obstructive proceedings—which they emphatically repudiated—by throwing upon the Government the whole responsibility in this matter, and leaving to them the consequences of their own acts.

Mr. JUSTIN M'CARTHY thought that to press the adjournment would not be unwise, inasmuch as it would give the Government an opportunity of considering the matter and their position with regard to it at a very critical point of the discussion. On the general question, he, for one, would much prefer that the responsibility of deciding as to the conduct of any hon. Member should rest with Mr. Speaker, rather than with a number of Members who knew nothing of what had been going on, and who, by the Resolution, were to be qualified to pronounce judgment or pass sentence of execution. It was not, in his opinion, conducive to the dignity of the House to impose upon it the duties of executioner, and he thought it would be better if they could discover some other means by which to carry out the judgment. He thought that if by adjourning they could allow the Government to re-consider their position and to think calmly over the matter, they would thereby advance the future discussion of the whole question. With regard to the Chairman of Committees, there was both delicacy and difficulty in raising this question. The Chairman of Committees stood in altogether a different position from that of the Speaker of the House; and he thought the Government would be compelled to withdraw those portions of the Resolution which related to him and deal with that Officer in a separate manner. He hoped that the Government would keep this part of the question quite distinct from the other.

Earl PERCY expressed his astonishment at the doctrine laid down by the hon. Member for Birmingham, that the minority should give way to the majority for the purpose of passing this Resolution.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN said, the noble Lord had misunderstood him. He had said that "as far as the debate had gone there had been an unanimous expression"—except from the Government Bench of course—"in favour of the suggestion of the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition," and that "he thought that if the Government accepted that suggestion they would have the unanimous concurrence of the House."

Earl PERCY asked pardon of the hon. Member for Birmingham; but if that was the meaning of what he had said, he could not understand what was meant by the remark that it was in the power of the majority to cause an unwilling minority to pass an objectionable Resolution. He supposed, however, the hon. Member meant to say that those who sat on the side of the House opposite to him were ready to sacrifice their convictions in order to follow Her Majesty's Government. The hon. Member for Birmingham had told them that if the Government with their majority forced this Resolution on the minority the minority should throw the responsibility upon the majority—that they should abdicate their functions altogether; cease to criticize, and cease to endeavour to force their opinions upon the House. If that were to be their doctrine as between majorities and minorities in the House of Commons it would very soon come to this—that the minority would tyrannize over the majority. But he thought it would have been a bolder course for the minority in the House to pursue—a course which he had seen pursued on former occasions—to have criticized and boldly challenged, if they pleased, a decision, and when defeated not to have ceased, he had almost said in a huff, to carry out their duty as a minority and as an Opposition of criticizing the Government proposals.

MR. ASSHETON CROSS rose to call attention to the question immediately before the House. If they did not take care the country would begin to think they were not in earnest in the matter at all. The Government had brought forward the Resolutions with the intention of carrying them, as he believed, with the approbation of the great majority of the House. One thing was quite certain—they could not finish them that night; and another thing was equally clear—they could go on with no other Business of the House until they were finished. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had already said that if the discussion was not concluded at that Sitting it would have to be resumed at 12 o'clock next morning. That being so, he thought the most sensible thing which the House could do would be at once to adjourn the debate. But, before he sat down, there were one or two points to which he desired to refer. He had said that the country might think, after all, that the Government was not in earnest with regard to this Resolution. They had heard a good deal in the course of the debate from hon. Members who had said that "obstruction was a thing which must be put down, and that they had got one step further in the desired direction, and that, as a whole, they approved of the proposal which the Government had brought forward." Those hon. Members then proceeded by what they called "friendly criticism" to draw, as the common phrase went, a great many red herrings across the path of the Government. He did not like that general praise and general persistent criticism which prevented your getting to the end proposed; he would much rather have open opposition. With regard to the question they were discussing, as to whether everything relating to the suspension of a Member should be left in the hands of Mr. Speaker, he thought the matter had been properly put before the House by the hon. and learned Member for Chatham (Mr. Gorst). The Speaker, noticing an hon. Member offending, would form his own judgment and name the Member; the question would then be put to the House in order that suspension might follow. Could the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) suppose that the present Speaker, or any other Speaker whose impartiality was to be depended upon, would call a Member to Order under such circumstances that, when it came to be put to the House whether his sentence was to be carried out, the question would be decided by a Party vote? Such a Motion would never be brought before the House by Mr. Speaker unless he knew, as a matter of absolute certainty, that the division would not be a Party one. He believed that what had been stated by the hon. and learned Member for Chatham was perfectly true—that when the Speaker had named a Member the judgment of the House would have more effect upon that Member who had been called to Order, as well as upon the country, than it would have had had it been recorded as the judgment of the Speaker only.

MR. SHAW said, that, so far as he could judge, the Amendment had been discussed in a very business-like manner. He could safely say that if some time ago the Government had shown any disposition to yield upon this point, he had intended to appeal to his hon. Friend to withdraw his other Amendments in order that Business might be facilitated; but the Government seemed to have made up its mind, and to be determined not to yield upon the question. He was sure that the House required further time for the consideration of this matter. There were two questions before the House—one was as to an offence committed in the House, and the other as to an offence committed while in Committee of the Whole House. In the first case, there could be no difficulty in leaving the entire decision to the Speaker; but as to an offence committed while the Chairman of Committees was in the Chair a very different question was raised. That was the real difficulty. The Chairman of Committees, when sitting in the Chair, might name some hon. Member for committing an offence, and his decision was to be taken without appeal. He had to report the case to the Speaker when the House was formed, and then the Speaker was to give the hon. Member 10 minutes to explain, and then was to call upon the House to come to a decision. That proceeding took away, therefore, the absolute decision from the Chairman, and was as much for his own protection as for anything else. He would be accused of acting from Party spirit were the procedure of appealing to the House not given to him. He threw out this suggestion as a possible means of compromise for the Government to adopt.

Mr. MONK observed, that when he interrupted during the speech of the right hon. Gentleman it was for the purpose of explaining that he had not opposed this Resolution; but, on the contrary, had been most anxious to support the Government.

Mr. O'DONNELL said, that if anything like a fair opportunity of explanation, or a fair opportunity of obtaining a reliable judgment from the House was provided, then he should be prepared to admit that his Amendment providing for the attendance of 100 Members was absurd. But the Government Resolution, as it stood, permitted everything to be done without notice and without explanation; and it seemed to him that it was absolutely necessary to provide for the presence of a full quorum throughout. If his Amendment was therefore monstrous, it was only monstrous in consequence of the monstrosity of the proposition which rendered it necessary. He had listened with the greatest pain to the apparent efforts of hon. Members opposite to attach Party significance to the question of Order, which he thought ought to be the property of the House. He was the most uninfluential Member of the House; but he had confidence not only in the public attention of Ireland, but in that of England, and he could assure the Government that if they took up an attitude of imputing improper motives to their opponents on that side of the House he would make them understand what could be done by the opposition of men who did not respect them.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do take the Chair To-morrow, at Twelve of the clock."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Mr. CALLAN said, that Irish Members were mostly in business, and that it was inconvenient for them to attend so early as 12 o'clock. He should suggest that it would facilitate Business if the House were to meet at 2 o'clock.

Mr. SPEAKER said, that he would point out to the hon. Member that, according to the ordinary practice, when the House sat on Saturdays, it always met at 12 o'clock.

Mr. CALLAN said, he would ask whether he would be in Order in moving that the House should meet at 2 instead of 12. It was most unusual for the House in the first month of the Session to sit on Saturdays.

Mr. SPEAKER said, that the hon. Member would be in Order in making the Motion he proposed; but the course was very unusual.

Mr. CALLAN said, it was a very unusual circumstance for the House to sit at all on a Saturday in the first month of the Session; and, notwithstanding that the course he was about to take was unusual, he should make the Motion.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "Twelve," and insert the word "Two."—(*Mr. Callan.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'Twelve' stand part of the Question."

Mr. O'DONNELL said, that it would be a fair compromise to Irish Members to allow the House to sit at 2 o'clock. It was just as well to make some concession to the convenience of hon. Members opposite. He did not think that English Gentlemen would wish to carry the debate through by inconveniencing their opponents.

Question put.

The House *divided:*—Ayes 87; Noes 15: Majority 72.—(Div. List, No. 24.)

Main Question put.

Resolved, That Mr. Speaker do take the Chair To-morrow, at Twelve of the clock.

MOTION.

INDIA STOCK (POWERS OF ATTORNEY) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. EDWARD STANHOPE, Bill to make Powers of Attorney and Requests for transmission of Dividend Warrants by post, relating to India Five per Centum Stock, applicable to India Four per Centum Stock, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. EDWARD STANHOPE and Lord GEORGE HAMILTON.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 93.]

House adjourned at Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Saturday, 28th February, 1880.

The House met at Twelve of the clock.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

PARLIAMENT — BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (ORDER IN DEBATE)—RESOLUTION.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [THIRD DAY.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [26th February].

And which Amendment was,

In line 1, after the word "Member," to insert the words "at least one hundred Members being present."—(*Mr. O'Donnell.*)

Question again proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Debate *resumed.*

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

Question put.

The House *divided:* — Ayes 8; Noes 68: Majority 60.—(Div. List, No. 25.)

MR. CALLAN said, he rose with some reluctance to move the omission, in lines 2 and 3, of the words "or by the Chairman of a Committee of the whole House." He should have preferred to see it moved by someone sitting on the front Opposition Bench; but as upon the present occasion the Opposition seemed from some hidden motive to have abstained from undertaking the *rôle* of an Opposition, or from criticizing in any spirit of independence the Resolutions placed before them by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he had felt it incumbent upon him to submit the Amendment. When he first saw the Resolution he formed the opinion, which had since been somewhat strengthened by the debate, that it was an ill-considered and an ill-arranged Resolution. He now found that it had evidently been maturely considered; that it was intended as a trap for the Irish Members, and that it was to form an unworthy excuse for a discreditable appeal to the country upon a false issue. Now, he would not for a moment raise his voice against the proposal for vesting the Speaker with the power laid down in the Resolution, except to say that, in his opinion, the authority should be Sessionally conferred, for an expiring Parliament should not presume to fetter or to dictate to the new Parliament about to be elected. However much he might have differed from the present Speaker and his Predecessors, he was only too ready to acknowledge that the reign of the present occupier of the Chair had been marked by strict impartiality, and that not the faintest suspicion ever attached to his decision. But he would be lacking in a spirit of manliness, if he did not object to vesting such powers as those in question in the Chairman of Committees. He must say that during the 12 years he had had the honour of a seat in that House he had never seen the Chairman of Committees, whether sitting on the Ministerial or the Opposition Bench, exhibit the same amount of impartiality as the right hon. Gentleman whom he now addressed. In fact, he would say that the decisions of an ex-Chairman of Committees who now sat on the front Opposition Bench (Mr. Dodson), while as dogmatical and despotic as those of the present Chairman, were given in a still more arbitrary and offensive manner.

MR. O'DONNELL rose to Order. He wished to know if it was in Order to discuss the conduct of the present occupant of this high Office? For his own part, he (Mr. O'Donnell) wished entirely to dissociate himself from any personal attack made upon the Chairman of Ways and Means by the hon. Member for Dundalk.

Mr. CALLAN said, the hon. Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell) would have an opportunity later on of dissociating himself from the remarks which he (Mr. Callan) felt it his duty to make. Perhaps the reason why the hon. Member wished to dissociate himself from these remarks was that he (Mr. Callan) had never associated himself with the hon. Member's system of obstruction.

Mr. BIGGAR begged to ask Mr. Speaker whether his hon. Friend the Member for Dundalk was justified in attributing obstruction to an hon. Member, especially when the object of the Resolution now before the House was to hold up obstruction as a matter for reprobation?

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not aware that any offence against Order has been committed by the hon. Member for Dundalk; but I must say that interruptions of this character are in themselves disorderly.

Mr. CALLAN proceeded to remark that the Speaker having been elected in his Office by the paramount authority of the House, and having been raised to the position of First Commoner of England, was placed beyond all considerations of Party; but the present Chairman of Committees was, and always was, a Party man, and invariably a strong partizan. Therefore, he thought it would be derogatory to the House and degrading to the independence of Members, if the power proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Resolution was put into his hands. He thought if the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been in an amiable mood, and had desired to conciliate rather than aggravate the Members of that side of the House, he would have moved three Resolutions instead of two. He would have moved that the Speaker should have the more stringent powers asked for by the Resolution. He would then have asked for more stringent powers for the Chairman of Committees than he at present possessed; and, lastly, he would have sought to surround such powers by certain safeguards for the preservation of the Privileges of the Members of the House. If he might be allowed to examine the conduct of the present Chairman of Committees, he would venture to assert he was an Obstructionist of the very first water. He remembered to have heard on one occasion that when only five Members were present, and the present Chairman of Committees presided, he had made use of tactics which they on that side of the House deemed to be most unworthy. At one of the late Sittings, an hon. and gallant Gentleman made use of observations which should at once have been checked by the Chairman of Committees. He (Mr. Callan) rose to Order; but as he was not permitted to speak until a few minutes had elapsed, he was told then that he was precluded from making the Motion which it was undoubtedly his right to make—namely, that the words used by the speaker should be taken down, such words being unquestionably an offence to the House. On another occasion the noble Lord the Member for Calne (Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice) and the hon. Baronet the Member for Hastings (Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth)—two nice-looking young men for a small tea-party—actually undertook to prepare an indictment against the hon. Members for Meath (Mr. Parnell) and Cavan (Mr. Biggar), with the object of having them suspended from the service of the House. He himself (Mr. Callan) heard this conspiracy concocted, and he warned the hon. Members for Meath and Cavan of what was taking place. He was bound to say that an explanation was made to him by the Clerk of the House which was very creditable as far as his conduct was concerned, which showed that that Gentleman was no party to the conspiracy. The Chairman of Committees did not deny the charge; he wished to give him an opportunity of doing so now, and would ask him whether he was a party to that conspiracy? ["No, no!"]

Mr. COURTNEY: I rise to Order.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Dundalk has given Notice of an Amendment with reference to the Chairman of Committees of the Whole House being intrusted under the Resolution with certain powers. In speaking to that Question, the hon. Member for Dundalk has gone back to certain transactions which ought to have been taken notice of at the time, if they were to be taken notice of at all. It certainly does seem to me that the hon. Member is travelling beyond what is regular in going back to the circumstances which occurred at the time to which he is referring.

MR. CALLAN said, he would at once bow to the decision of the Speaker; but he must state in self-defence that he did allude to the circumstance at the time, and no contradiction was offered. He had merely mentioned it now for the purpose of ascertaining if there was any truth in the rumour, generally circulated and believed at the time, that the present Chairman of Committees was a party to such a transaction. If so, he wished to use it as an argument why the House should not intrust the hon. Gentleman with power to silence a Member. He would go now to another case, and refer to what happened in the debate upon the Transvaal business. He remembered that as the night progressed he sat as a silent Member, disapproving very much of what was happening on that occasion; but, feeling that there would be an attempt to establish a precedent out of the occurrence, he continued to watch the current of events from aloft as a calm spectator. The right hon. Member for Pontefract (Mr. Childers) was one of those who occupied the Chair on that occasion; and he must say that the right hon. Gentleman acted evidently with the intention of putting down this lot of Irish Members. ["Order!"]

MR. SPEAKER: The character and conduct of the Chairman of Ways and Means require no defence from me; but I have to point out to the hon. Member for Dundalk that it is scarcely fair, after a long lapse of time, no Notice being given, that he should now found charges against that hon. Member which are based mainly upon hearsay evidence and at second hand.

MR. CALLAN said, they were based, with all due respect for the Chair, neither upon hearsay nor at second hand, but upon his own hearing by personal observation. He might add that the hon. Baronet the Secretary to the Treasury (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson) also occupied the Chair on the occasion to which he referred, and, displaying the utmost impartiality, conducted the Business in a manner to reflect credit upon himself. He alluded to these matters, not for the purpose of making charges, but to warn the House against intrusting such powers to an occasional Chairman of Committees, who might, and probably would, be a strong partizan. The Resolutions of the Government were ill-arranged, or rather he should say, they were well arranged for the purpose of forcing a Dissolution on the country with a false issue. The noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition had abdicated his functions in giving support to the Government. And why had the Government brought forward these Resolutions? Because it would be a good war-cry to go to the country with. They all knew the importance which the noble Lord at the head of the Government attached to a good cry. They had all read his views on that subject in *Coningsby* and his other novels. His (Mr. Callan's) Amendment was directed, not against intrusting the Speaker with the powers which the Resolution proposed to confer upon him, but against committing what he conceived would be a blow against the dignity and independence of the House if they were to consent to intrust similar powers to a mere partizan. For these reasons he begged to move the Amendment of which he had given Notice.

Amendment proposed, in lines 2 and 3, to leave out the words "or by the Chairman of a Committee of the whole House."—(*Mr. Callan.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, I wish at once to express both my dissent from the proposal of the hon. Member, but still more emphatically my entire dissent, in which, I believe, I shall be supported by the great bulk of the House, from the tenour of the observations which the hon. Gentleman has permitted himself to make. Those observations did not appear to you, Sir, to be absolutely outside the Rules of Order; but, at the same time, I must say they were of a character which tried very much the patience of Members of this House. I think it is utterly impossible that the Business of this House can be conducted in a proper manner if we are not prepared to respect those who are placed in position and authority, and to support those who are placed in positions of great difficulty, delicacy, and responsibility. I venture to say, in opposition to the sentiments of the hon.

Member for Dundalk, that the very large majority—the great bulk of this House—I might almost venture to say, without fear of contradiction, the whole House, with the exception of the hon. Member, would repudiate the sort of charges he has endeavoured to cast against the Chairman of Committees. I venture to say that my hon. Friend, in the discharge of the duties which have devolved upon him during the last six Sessions, has laboured most assiduously to do his duty, not only with delicacy, but also with strict impartiality. He has been subjected to great trials, and I can only express my own sense of sympathy with him in the difficult position in which he has frequently been placed. I think the observations you made a short time ago were observations which would commend themselves entirely to the sense of justice of everyone in the House. If it was thought right and necessary to impugn the conduct of the Chairman of Ways and Means, the proper occasion would have been the moment the matter complained of occurred, when the decision of the House upon the validity of the complaint should have been taken at once. If it was not thought right or necessary to make those complaints at the time they occurred, then the matter ought to be laid aside. Nothing can be more injurious—I will not say unfair—to the hon. Member who holds the position of Chairman of Ways and Means, nothing can be more injurious to the interests of the House itself, than that questions of this sort should be liable to be raised from time to time, and suggestions thrown out, and imputations and insinuations made, which are of a character so detrimental to one who takes a prominent part in the service of the House. I did not rise to question the use of the word "conspiracy;" but I was very much tempted to do so. I doubt whether such a word ought to have been used; but I thought it was better we should allow the hon. Member to have his full swing, and say all that he had to say, rather than attempt to stifle any observations he wished to make. The House has heard those observations, and I venture to think that they receive very little support at the hands of the House. With regard to the Motion which has been made, I can only say that if we are to strike out the reference to the Chairman of Committees and confine ourselves to the action of the Speaker when the House is sitting as a Whole House, we shall fail to meet one of the very great difficulties we have to encounter. It is much more frequently the case when the House is in Committee that these difficulties arise. In evidence taken in 1878 you, Sir, yourself, in giving evidence on the subject, after noticing what you had observed when you were in the Chair, went on to say that such cases occurred more frequently when the House was in Committee. It is impossible that you could take any proceedings while the House is in that position, because you are not present; and if we are to have any order at all it must be by committing the power to the Chairman of Ways and Means. I expressed the opinion last night, and I retain the same opinion now—that it is right the Chairman of Ways and Means should be supported in what he does by the vote of the House. I think it would be altogether destructive of the proposals we are making if we were to consent to the suggestion that these words be struck out.

Mr. CHILDERS said, the hon. Member for Dundalk had done him the honour to attack him for something which he did two years ago. It was an honour, and as such he accepted it. It was true that he did take the Chair between 3 and 4 o'clock in the morning, and he occupied it for about four hours, and during most of the time the hon. Member for Liskeard (Mr. Courtney) was taking a very vigorous, but not an irregular, objection to the Bill. But when three or four Members constantly got up and moved to leave out the word "the" or some noun or adjective, he confessed that he did pretty strongly express his opinion that any hon. Member who moved an Amendment was bound to move sense. That was the only course he took on that occasion, except putting the Amendments as they were moved. He thought that any repetition of conduct of that kind, which the whole House, except three or four Members, reprobated at the moment, should not be allowed to occur again. He must repeat that if ever there was a case of wilful obstruction by moving Amendments that were mere nonsense in the result it was that, and if it were ever his duty to take the Chair in Committee again, he would take the same course as he had then.

MR. SHAW expressed his regret that any personal element had been introduced into the debate, for they were now discussing one of the most important questions that could be brought before the House. The proposals of the Government required all their calmness and attention, and he did not think they would effect any good object by importing anything into the debate of a personal character. So far as he was individually concerned, he had nothing to complain of in the conduct of the Chairman of Ways and Means. The duties that Gentleman had to perform were sometimes of a very onerous and laborious description, and he certainly performed them in a very satisfactory manner. He wondered that he had not done something much more out of Order, something much more extraordinary than he had ever seen him do. He believed the Chairman of Ways and Means deserved sympathy rather than censure. As to his being a partizan, that was another question altogether; it was really the question they had to debate in this Amendment. Just as the House was rising the previous night he took the liberty of calling attention to this point. He hoped that no further personality would be indulged in, but that they would proceed to what ought to be their main object—namely, to induce the Government to consent to such alterations as would really improve and simplify the Office of the Chairman of Ways and Means, and relieve the Chairman himself of a most unpleasant duty he might be called upon to perform. The Chairman of Ways and Means must really be the actor under the Resolution. The Speaker would have little to do in carrying it out; the Chairman of Ways and Means, on the discussion of Amendments that would constantly be moved in Committee, would be the Gentleman upon whom the real burden of the Resolution would fall. On every occasion that hon. Gentleman must be in the Chair to decide; the Speaker and the House would only be called in as executioners to see that his ruling was carried out. Under the circumstances, if the Chairman of Ways and Means was a Party man, and was compelled from the position he occupied to call a Member of the Committee constantly to Order, he would be exposed to attacks which would lessen the dignity of the House, would weaken the authority of the Chair, and destroy the respect and confidence which the people had in the House of Commons. He suggested, as a compromise, that when the Chairman named a Member the House should be re-formed, and the Member accused should have an opportunity of defending himself, and if his explanation was not satisfactory the decision would not be carped at. It could not then be said that they were acting as partizans, and they would be acting with full knowledge and information of the facts of the case.

LORD EDMOND FITZMAURICE: I understand that in my absence, and without the courtesy of any Notice to me, the hon. Member for Dundalk has made an attack on me.

MR. CALLAN: I made no attack on the noble Lord. I referred to two Members who were preparing an indictment against the hon. Members for Meath and Cavan, in order to give them an opportunity of contradicting the statement.

LORD EDMOND FITZMAURICE: My hon. Friend the Member for Liskeard (Mr. Courtney) has given me what I have no doubt is a perfectly accurate account of what occurred. The hon. Member used the word "conspiracy." Now, conspiracy is an agreement to do something which is illegal and criminal. The hon. Member used that word, and also stated that he had made these charges on a former occasion. I have no recollection of his having done anything of the kind, or I would have taken a public opportunity of denying it. I wish to say that if the hon. Member has any charge to make against me, and will make it at a proper time, and will give me due Notice of his charge, I shall be prepared to state to the House anything that may have taken place. Last year, when there was gross and persistent obstruction, I did consult the Clerk at the Table as to whether something might not be done. I wish to take this opportunity of saying that when the hon. Member coupled my name with that of the Chairman of Committees, and used the word "conspiracy," to the best of my recollection I had no communication with that hon. Gentleman on the subject. In making that statement, the hon. Member for Dundalk indulged in his usual substantial inaccuracy.

Mr. NEWDEGATE hoped the House would adhere to its ancient practice, which was that when anything occurred in Committee that was inconsistent with Order the Chairman should exercise an original authority, and that the House should resume, and the matter be referred to the Whole House. He was of opinion that they ought to render a tribute to the manner in which the Chairman discharged his duties. He hoped the Amendment would be rejected.

Mr. HOPWOOD supported the Resolution, because its acceptance had been recommended by those to whom he owed allegiance, and because the Government believed it was necessary to pass something of the kind. At the same time, he did not himself think that a point had been reached which made the passing of such a Motion a matter of necessity. Whenever the Government had showed any determination to pass a Bill they had received sufficient support from the Opposition to enable them to overcome all obstruction placed in their way. The hon. and learned Member was proceeding to refer to occurrences in connection with the Army Discipline and Regulation Bill, when——

Mr. SPEAKER pointed out that the hon. and learned Gentleman was now discussing the general question, and not confining himself, as he was bound to do, to the Amendment actually before the House.

Mr. HOPWOOD, resuming, said, he was not in favour of investing the Chairman of Committees with the power which it was proposed to vest in him by the Resolution, for a Chairman of Committees must always be appointed by a majority in the House, and, being identified with the dominant Party, must naturally feel great irritation at conduct which he considered to be undue opposition.

Mr. SYNAN charged the Government with being responsible for protracting the discussion, because they would not say whether they intended to accept the proposal that had been made for the purpose of protecting an accused Member from the sentence of the Chairman of Committees. He (Mr. Synan) did not see how they could now strike out the Chairman of Committees; but he did think they ought to give the Member an opportunity of being heard before he was condemned.

Mr. O'DONNELL hoped that personal matters would not be gone into again, although he wished to inform the right hon. Member for Pontefract (Mr. Childers) that he was wrong in supposing that in the reference that was made to him anything derogatory to his fairness whilst in the Chair, during the absence of the Chairman, was intended. With regard to the moving of an Amendment which did not make "sense," that was only done once, and it was only practised then for the purpose of putting the question of the power of the hon. Member to make such an Amendment to the test, and of eliciting an opinion from the Chair on the matter. With regard to the Amendment before the House, he felt some embarrassment as to how he should vote. If the Government intended to give the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means the power of suspending a Member from speaking and voting for a whole evening, he should vote in favour of the omission from the Resolution of the words "Chairman of Ways and Means." It seemed to him that throughout the Resolution there was a wholesale confusion between the disciplinary and penal and the summary and superior jurisdiction of the House. He thought that the Chairman of Committees should have full power to silence a Member who had been guilty of an offence in a Committee of the Whole House for the whole of that Committee; and where a similar offence was committed in the House, the Speaker should likewise have the power of silencing the Member for the whole Sitting. But when a Member should have been guilty two or three times during the same Session, a cumulative offence would have been committed transcending the summary jurisdiction of the Chairman.

Mr. A. GATHORNE HARDY asked if the hon. Member was in Order, as he was really discussing an Amendment which had not yet been reached?

Mr. SPEAKER ruled that the observations of the hon. Member for Dungarvan were relevant to the subject matter of the Amendment before the House, although, no doubt, they also had reference to another Amendment.

MR. O'DONNELL proceeded to say that, where a cumulative offence had been committed, something more should be invoked than the summary jurisdiction of the Chairman or Speaker. The House, in such a case, should be applied to as a tribunal of supreme jurisdiction, and should mete out a punishment proportionate to the offence. In this manner the offence of obstruction would be decisively put down, and the power of the Commons would be maintained. He would only add that there was not the dimmest idea of obstruction on the Home Rule Benches. They were fighting a straightforward battle; but if they found it hopeless to amend the Resolution they would desist, and leave upon the Government the responsibility of passing a bad Order.

MR. EVELYN ASHLEY thought that, as the understanding was to accept the proposals of the Government with all their faults, no more time should be wasted over the matter, and that the House should accept the Resolution in the form in which it was presented to it. It seemed to him that a great deal of strength of argument had been expended uselessly against the proposal of the Government, for there was no inherent absurdity in the proposal to call in the House after the Speaker should have named an hon. Member. The Speaker or Chairman of Committees would act as a jury; and if he pronounced a verdict of guilty the House would be called in to pronounce sentence, and it would take into consideration the antecedents of a Member. The practice of calling in the House to pronounce judgment might be a very great protection to an hon. Member. He could imagine, for instance, the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) annoying a Chairman very much by one of his inflammatory speeches, which acted on some Gentlemen below the Gangway as a red rag did to a bull; and he could imagine the Chairman, wishing to get on with Business, pronouncing the hon. Member out of Order. Now, he should be sorry to pronounce that hon. Member, who was often an Obstructionist *malgré lui*, to have been guilty of an offence for which the penalty proposed by the Resolution should be inflicted on him; and it would, he thought, be a protection to individual Members to have the House called upon to decide upon their conduct.

MR. COURTNEY pointed out that the proper occasion for discussing whether a different form of procedure should be adopted when the House was in Committee would arise later on in the Resolution, and urged that the discussion of the question at issue would be much facilitated if the Government would state the views with respect to it which they held. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) had suggested that when a case of irregularity presented itself in Committee the proceedings of the Committee should at once be suspended, that the Chairman should report the offence to the Speaker, who should then call upon the Member incriminated to explain his conduct, and that the Member having been heard in his own defence the House should then come to a vote in the matter. He could understand the House being then called upon to take action, and being in a position to pronounce an impartial decision; but, as he had already suggested, the proper time to consider the point was when certain words of the Resolution which stood lower down came to be discussed.

LORD JOHN MANNERS expressed a doubt as to whether the termination of the discussion in which the House was engaged would be facilitated by any statement which might be made by him or any other Member of the Government; but as a direct appeal had been made to them by the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken, he had no hesitation in saying that the Government had very carefully considered the various suggestions which had been made for the amendment of the Resolutions, and that they adhered to the proposals which they had originally submitted to the House. It was obvious that if the course indicated by the hon. Gentleman were taken, the Chairman of Committees would, immediately after naming the inculpated Member, have, without remark, to report the circumstance to the Speaker, and then the Member would have an opportunity of giving his view of the matter, and the House be called upon to give judgment upon the *ex parte* statement of the Member whose conduct was complained of, so that it would not be in the nature of that fair and impartial judgment which the advocates of that mode of proceeding seemed to suppose. The Government, therefore, as he had said, preferred to stand by their original proposal, which was, in a great measure, the same as that which had been recommended by the Committee upstairs.

Mr. DODSON thought that the announcement just made by the noble Lord ought to have the effect of greatly abridging the discussion, inasmuch as the Government had a majority at their back, which, as the House was well aware, would enable them to carry any proposal to which they might announce it to be their intention to adhere. He might, however, observe that he dissented from the noble Lord in the opinion that the Resolution of the Government was the same as that which had been recommended by the Committee, for it differed from it in three respects; and, in regard to two of these, he preferred the recommendation of the Committee. He was, at the same time, of opinion that it would be a waste of time to prolong the discussion on the Amendment, and that the responsibility of passing the Resolution as it stood should be allowed to rest on the shoulders of the Government.

Mr. O'CLERY said, he was strongly opposed to giving the Chairman of Committees the power which it was proposed to confer upon him; and he hoped that in the interests of fair play his hon. Friend the Member for Dundalk would press his Amendment to a division. It was evident that the Liberals who had taken part in the discussion were animated in the course they were pursuing by the consideration of the approaching General Election. His belief was that, notwithstanding all they had said during the Recess, they were abstaining from active opposition to the Resolution in order to prevent the Government from immediately dissolving Parliament.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must really call the attention of the hon. Member to the Question before the House, which is that of the power to be vested in the Chairman of Committees.

Mr. O'CLERY said, he hoped that the Representatives of Ireland would show that they had an earnest desire that the Rules of the House should be based on principles of fair play and impartiality. He should oppose the Resolution to the utmost.

The O'DONOGHUE said, the Chancellor of the Exchequer remarked last night that the Business of the House could not be carried on unless those in authority were treated with proper respect. That, he believed, every hon. Member was ready to admit; but then it was incumbent upon those authorities so to demean themselves as to command that respect. He therefore protested against the notion that the conduct of those who held office should not be criticized. He might remind the House that on one memorable instance in Parliamentary history the Speaker had to be held in his seat and forced to do his duty. As for the Government, it was impossible for them to extricate themselves from the ridiculous position in which they had placed themselves. It might be disagreeable for them or their supporters to hear this; but there was no resisting the logic of facts. They had no defence for the grounds they took up, and this morning he saw that the Conservative papers had absolutely nothing to say on behalf of them. Although the noble Lord the Postmaster General said they had considered the subject, he did not condescend to tell them the arguments or reasons upon which they arrived at their conclusions, which, he (the O'Donoghue) submitted, must be rather peculiar, as it was beyond the power of any Member on the Opposition side of the House to form the remotest idea of what their arguments could be. He complained that the Chairman of Committees or the Speaker were to have the power to give a decision, and they were to be assisted by the House, without having heard a single word in the matter. Members would find themselves no better able to give proper decisions than would a body of cabmen called from the coffee snuggery in Palace Yard. It was clear that the Resolutions were aimed at those who represented the people of Ireland in that House. The position of Chairman of Committees was a singular one, as he was a Party man; and he, therefore, thought there was good reason for the adoption of the Amendment. He could only add that he was surprised at the bulk of the Opposition allowing the Government, without protest, to force their Resolution through the House.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON said, if a proposal of this kind was to be adopted at all it must be applied to

Committees as well as Sittings of the House; and as the initiative under the Resolution as to proceedings in Committee must be vested in someone, he was of opinion it would be most properly left in the hands of the Chairman. The only alternative he could see to the proposal of the Government was that notice should be taken of an offence by some Member of the Committee other than the Chairman; but the matter would come before the House again when another part of the Resolution was submitted. There was really therefore, he thought, no good reason for prolonging the discussion of the Amendment before the House; and he agreed with the hon. Member for Liskeard (Mr. Courtney) that the main proposal would be more advantageously dealt with later on. Under these circumstances, he thought it would be wise of the hon. Member for Dundalk (Mr. Callan) to withdraw his Amendment.

MR. CALLAN said, he would follow the course pointed out. He did not wish to go to a needless division when they could decide the matter on another part of the Resolution. He would be willing to withdraw his Amendment. ["No, no!"]

MR. FINIGAN contended that it would be dangerous to give so arbitrary a power as that proposed to the Chairman of Committees, who was almost always a strong partizan. He hoped the House would consider the conciliatory suggestions offered by the hon. Member for Cork and the hon. Member for Liskeard. He was sorry the Government had thrown down the gauntlet, and intimated that the House was to be governed by a majority, and not by reason or argument. If hon. Members from Ireland were to be overridden by a tyrannical and unreflecting majority, they would feel it their duty to continue the war to the bitter end. It should be remembered that a Government might rule, not, as at present, by a large majority, but by a narrow one of three or four votes; and if the Resolution were passed in its present form, it would be a melancholy thing to arm a Chairman with power to silence a Member who might be making a proposal inconvenient if not fatal to such a Ministry.

MR. BIGGAR maintained that the Chairman of Committees, if a partizan, as he would in all probability be, would be wholly unfitted for the duties proposed to be imposed on him. The evil would be still greater in the case of a Deputy Chairman, who was, it seemed to him, an entirely irresponsible person. Take, for example, the case of the South Africa Bill. What happened in connection with that measure?

MR. SPEAKER said, the only Question before the House was the Amendment of the hon. Member for Dundalk, an Amendment which that hon. Gentleman had expressed his willingness to withdraw.

MR. BIGGAR said, he was not aware that the hon. Member for Dundalk had asked for leave to withdraw his Amendment. ["Oh, oh!"] He did not think that hon. Gentleman could have seriously intended to say so; for he had requested him, a short time ago, on leaving the House, to challenge a division on the subject.

MR. CHAPLIN rose to Order. He asked whether it was in Order for one Member of the House to impute to another Member that he did not intend to say that which he actually stated. He understood the hon. Member for Cavan to imply that when the hon. Member for Dundalk said he was willing to withdraw his Amendment, the latter Gentleman was not serious in making that statement.

MR. SPEAKER said, it would appear that the hon. Member for Dundalk stated one thing to the House, and, according to the hon. Member for Cavan, another thing to that hon. Gentleman. It was for the hon. Members to reconcile these statements to the House.

MR. BIGGAR repeated, that the hon. Member for Dundalk, on leaving the House, had requested him, in distinct terms, to challenge a division. Reverting to his former strain of observation, he desired to state that his own experience of Deputy Chairman had been exceedingly unfavourable. He had seen a Gentleman in that position so incompetent and confused that he scarcely knew how to put the Question. Then, again, other hon. Members were decided partizans. Take, for example, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Pontefract (Mr. Childers); he was an unblushing partizan.

MR. H. SAMUELSON rose to Order. He asked whether the hon. Member was in Order in referring to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Pontefract as an unblushing partizan, when the conduct of the right hon. Gentleman had nothing whatever to do with the Question before the House?

Mr. SPEAKER said, he had already indicated to the hon. Member for Cavan that he ought to keep his observations strictly to the Amendment before the House, which was that of the hon. Member for Dundalk.

Mr. BIGGAR said, he simply wanted to impress upon the House the inexpediency of placing the liberty of Members in the hands of partizans who might be unable to control their Party feelings.

Sir PATRICK O'BRIEN said, that, in his opinion, the hon. Member for Mid-Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) had no right to question the veracity, or attempt to lecture other hon. Gentlemen, as he had tried to do.

Mr. SPEAKER again pointed out that the Question before the House was the Amendment of the hon. Member for Dundalk.

Sir PATRICK O'BRIEN said, he did not understand that the hon. Member for Mid-Lincolnshire possessed any particular privileges in making his observations. ["Order!"]

Mr. SPEAKER said, the hon. Member referred to rose to a point of Order; that had been decided, and any discussion now should bear strictly upon the Amendment.

Sir PATRICK O'BRIEN said, he submitted, of course, to the ruling of the Chair. He objected to the power proposed to be conferred on the Chairman of Committees and the casual Deputy Chairmen; for, even though they were angels, they could not separate themselves from Party politics. At the same time, he wished to disavow any sympathy with obstruction. With the exception of the late Mr. Butt, he (Sir Patrick O'Brien) believed he was the only Irish Member who had expressed his condemnation of obstruction; and what he had said in past times on that subject, even if it should involve the loss of his seat to-morrow, he would not withdraw. With regard to the Amendment, he thought it raised a very important question; and if it went to a division he would, not from any motives of obstruction, but on general grounds, vote in favour of it.

Mr. H. Samuelson

Mr. CALLAN desired to explain the misunderstanding which had apparently arisen with respect to his Amendment. He had asked to withdraw it, but the House refused to give him permission to do so; and in these circumstances, and not wishing that it should be negatived without a division, he had requested the hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) to challenge a division upon it.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 191; Noes 17: Majority 174.—(Div. List, No. 26.)

Mr. FINIGAN said, that in the absence of his hon. Friend the Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell) he begged to move the omission, in line 4 of the Resolution, of the words "or otherwise," which, he contended, were useless and senseless. He failed to see either their object or meaning. They opened up a wide field of debate, and might have consequences which were not foreseen to both sides of the House. He trusted the Government would give up the objectionable words without any debate or division.

Amendment proposed, in line 4, to leave out the words "or otherwise."—(*Mr. Finigan.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'or otherwise' stand part of the Question."

Mr. WHITBREAD explained the necessity for retaining these words, and pointed out that the words in question, which were embodied in the Resolution by the Committee on Public Business at his instance, enabled the House to inflict a much milder punishment for an abuse of its Rules than might be inflicted under its existing powers, and to do so without waste of time in debate. The majority of the House had been for some time of opinion that there had been wilful and persistent obstruction with an ulterior object. This Resolution was designed to put a stop to that; but the Rules of the House might still be abused. It was not for him to suggest in what way obstruction might crop up in a new form. He thanked the hon. Member for Cork for his speech, and he hoped it would be well considered by the constituencies in Ireland.

Mr. SYNAN did not think the House had been satisfied as to the construction to be placed upon the words "or otherwise." If the Resolution was intended as a declaration that all cases of abuse of Order or violation of the Rules of the House should come under the penalty, and that it was a definition of the power of the Speaker, then he could understand the retention of the words; but if, on the other hand, the Resolution was intended as a particular machinery applicable to a certain kind of obstruction, then the words were not only unnecessary but mischievous. The words left the House in doubt as to whether the Resolution was to be a universal and general declaration of the law of the House, or whether they were to constitute an addition to its ordinary law. If it was intended that there should be a particular mode of punishing a particular offence, what was meant by the phrase "or otherwise?"

MR. NEWDEGATE said, that it was not without reason that these two words had been objected to by many hon. Members, and by the right hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), whose experience in that House was greater and longer than that of any other Member. It was impossible to consider those words without reference to the penalty which would be attached according to the latter part of the Resolution. He had seen an hon. Member (Mr. Feargus O'Connor) approach the Chair in a threatening manner, and afterwards strike another Member in the face, the unfortunate man being afterwards found to be a lunatic. On other occasions he had seen Members committed to the custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms. Such grave and aggravated offences occurred but seldom, but he was sorry to say they had occurred; and he would ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the effect of this Resolution would not be to bring this grave class of offences under the operation of the latter words, by which a Member could only be suspended for that Sitting? Offences of obstruction must be considered as cumulative. One act only of unduly straining the Forms of the House would not constitute the offence of obstruction.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT thought there would be no doubt, after the explanation given by the hon. Member for Bedford, that the meaning of the words was that any Member wilfully and persistently obstructing, or by any other method obstructing. The punctuation, however, was a little confusing. As the clause stood, the insertion of the comma made it appear that the words "or otherwise" were intended in a different category from abuse of the Rules of the House. It was quite plain that the phrase should stand—"by abusing the Rules of the House by obstruction or otherwise."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER believed there was no more difficult question to decide than where to put your commas. He always went back to the advice of an old master of composition — "Write without stops, but read with them." With regard to the words "or otherwise," he did not see how any sense could be made of the words except in the way in which the hon. and learned Member for Oxford (Sir William Harcourt) interpreted them. They were meant to apply to any case of abuse of the Rules of the House; and if a Member abused those Rules, either by specific and persistent obstruction, or in any other manner, then the proceedings indicated in the following lines of the Resolution were to take place. He was quite willing to expunge the offending comma, if that would be accepted as a concession. He did not consider that the Resolution in any way whatever superseded or surrendered the ancient powers of the House, or debarred it from proceeding in accordance with former precedents. It was intended as an additional and a supplementary form of proceeding in certain cases in which the old form of proceeding would be inapplicable or would lead to considerable inconvenience. It was considered inconvenient, when a Member had persistently opposed Business by irregular conduct, that it should be necessary to have the same sort of formal proceeding as would be followed had the Member been guilty of those graver offences such as those to which the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) referred. Here it was intended to substitute a punishment, if it could be so called, light in itself, but immediate in its application, the object being not so much to punish as to deter, and to deter not by the severity but the rapidity of the penalty. He thought the House would do well to adhere to the words "or otherwise."

Mr. BIGGAR pointed out that they could not now strike out the comma after "House," as they had dealt with an Amendment which came after it in the clause; but whether the comma remained in or not would make no difference. With the comma the Resolution was absurd, and it might stand in that form as a warning and example to future Leaders of the Government not to tamper with the Rules of the House.

Mr. O'DONNELL had come to the conclusion that it would be much better not to move any more Amendments, but simply to take a division on the main Resolution, against which he was prepared to vote. On the part of the Irish Members, he might say they were thoroughly thankful for the nature of the proposition on which obstruction was to come before the country. He expressed a hope that his Friends would move no more Amendments, but reserve themselves for the main vote. Then he hoped they had done with the matter in the House, though he promised the Government they had not heard the last of it in the country.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL moved the insertion of the words—

"The Member so named shall be permitted to offer such explanation, defence, or apology as he may see fit for a time not exceeding ten minutes."

He believed it was in accordance with the opinion of the House, and with common justice, that a man before being condemned should be heard in self-defence. The exact time to be allowed was immaterial; but he held that the opportunity of an explanation would in many cases render extreme measures unnecessary. It was quite possible that the difficulty might be got over by the Member apologizing or submitting himself to the House. Such a Rule might, too, prove of use, when it was a case of mistaken identity on the part of the Speaker.

Mr. H. SAMUELSON seconded the Amendment. It would give effect to the whole of the Resolution, for the vote of the House would carry but little weight if given in the absence of any explanation from the Member condemned. Though the House might be satisfied, yet the country might not be, and a Member might go down to his constituency and find those who sympathized with him, and to whom he could assert that he could have explained had the opportunity been allowed him. Without that explanation he might claim to be the victim of great injustice; and as a matter of justice between both the Member and the House, and between a Member and his constituents, the offender should be heard before the House proceeded to find a verdict and pass a sentence.

Amendment proposed,

In line 4, after the word "then," to insert the words "the Member so named shall be permitted to offer such explanation, defence, or apology as he may see fit for a time not exceeding ten minutes, after which."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER thought the Amendment was founded on a misapprehension. It had been supposed, for instance, that the Speaker might be mistaken in naming a Member on his committing an offence. But the Speaker or Chairman would, in the first instance, call a Member to Order, and probably nothing more would take place. No penalty would follow unless the offender persisted, and he would have every opportunity of making explanation or apology. He did not think it would be reasonable to allow the last word to the offending Member without allowing the Chairman to reply to statements, perhaps misrepresentations. The adoption of the words would only lead to additional wrangling and disputation.

Mr. SYNAN could not understand the process of reasoning by which it was supposed that the House really had a discretion in enforcing the penalty. The House must register the opinion of the Speaker, or else the latter could not possibly remain in his Office. His Amendment was contained in the recommendation of the Committee of 1878 on this subject, and why had it been departed from? However, Irish Members had seen with indignation that this was directed against themselves, and therefore left the Government to their responsibility and the indignation of the country. [*Laughter.*] Yes, let them take care that this high-handed proceeding did not receive criticism very different from what it had received in the House. He would leave that to time and to the country. It would be better that the Government should have the responsibility. It would be better for the country to know that the Government had exercised its power in a high-handed, illegal, unjustifiable manner.

Mr. COURTNEY reminded the House that a Resolution identical with the Amendment now proposed by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy became a Sessional Order of the House in 1878.

Mr. FINIGAN said, he should not attempt to amend the Resolution, but should follow the course pursued by the hon. Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell). At the same time, he would reserve his right to enter his protest at a future stage against the big battalions which were brought to bear from the other side of the House against the Irish Members.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 25; Noes 195: Majority 170.—(Div. List, No. 27.)

Amendment proposed, in line 8, after the word "House," to insert the words "other and except that of voting."—(*Mr. Courtney.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, he had not seen any reason to depart from the opinion he expressed yesterday. He should oppose the Amendment on the ground that suspension from voting as well as speaking was not too severe a punishment to inflict upon an offender. The course which the Government proposed should be taken was supported by high authority.

Sir GEORGE BOWYER, in supporting the Amendment, pointed out that the deprivation of a Member of the right of voting had not been resorted to for 200 years; and the proposal of the Government, in his opinion, was unconstitutional.

Major NOLAN thought this was a matter of a good deal of importance, because if the Amendment were acceded to it would remove any temptation there might be to weaken the votes of any Party.

Mr. SYNAN thought the Government need not be desirous of disfranchising any constituency, especially as they had legions behind them to carry any measure they wanted, whether it was right or wrong.

Mr. P. MARTIN thought it was an extraordinary thing that the Government should try to take advantage of the dark and evil precedents of 200 years ago. The Government Resolution would be considered in Ireland to be a Resolution framed for the purpose of disenfranchising the Irish constituencies. He held that the Conservative Party should not allow it to appear that it was their intention to operate unfairly on the Irish vote. He had no objection to the punishment of a Member if he offended; but he did object to punishing a constituency for the irregularity of a Member.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL said, he entirely acquitted the Government of any desire to punish particular individuals, or to gain additional votes; but complained that they did not meet in a fair spirit Amendments proposed by Members who had no sympathy with obstruction. They would yield nothing seemingly but a comma.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 42; Noes 172: Majority 130.

AYES.

Allen, W. S.
Balfour, Sir G.
Baring, T. C.
Bowyer, Sir G.
Briggs, W. E.
Brogden, A.
Burt, T.
Callan, P.
Cameron, C.
Campbell, Sir G.
Carington, hon. Col. W.
Chadwick, D.
Cobbold, T. C.
Dillwyn, L. L.
Edge, S. R.
Errington, G.
Evans, T. W.
Fawcett, H.
Fitzmaurice, Lord E.
Gladstone, W. H.
Gray, E. D.
Holms, J.
Hutchinson, J. D.
Jenkins, D. J.
Lusk, Sir A.
M'Kenna, Sir J. N.
Makins, Colonel W. T.
Martin, P.
Nolan, Major J. P.
O'Brien, Sir P.
O'Clery, K.
O'Gorman Mahon, Col. The
O'Shaughnessy, R.
Pennington, F.
Redmond, W. A.
Richard, H.
Ridley, E.
Sheil, E.
Sheridan, H. B.
Swanston, A.
Synan, E. J.
Trevelyan, G. O.

TELLERS.

Courtney, L. H.
O'Conor, D. M.

NOES.

Alexander, Colonel C.
Allcroft, J. D.
Allsopp, H.
Anstruther, Sir W.
Barrington, Viscount
Bates, E.
Bateson, Sir T.
Baxter, rt. hon. W. E.

Beach, rt. hon. Sir M. H.
Bentinck, rt. hn. G. C.
Birkbeck, E.
Blackburne, Col. J. I.
Blake, T.
Boord, T. W.
Bourke, hon. R.
Bousfield, Col. N. G. P.
Brooke, Lord
Brooks, W. C.
Bruen, H.
Burghley, Lord
Burrell, Sir W. W.
Cartwright, F.
Cavendish, Lord F. C.
Cavendish, Lord G.
Cecil, Lord E. H. B. G.
Clive, Col. hon. G. W.
Cole, Col. hon. H. A.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Cordes, T.
Corry, J. P.
Cotton, W. J. R.
Crichton, Viscount
Cross, rt. hon. R. A.
Cubitt, G.
Cuninghame, Sir W.
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dalrymple, C.
Davenport, W. B.
Denison, C. B.
Digby, Col. hon. E.
Eaton, H. W.
Edmonstone, Admiral Sir W.
Egerton, hon. A. F.
Elcho, Lord
Elphinstone, Sir J. D. H.
Emlyn, Viscount
Ewing, A. O.
Folkestone, Viscount
Forester, C. T. W.
Forsyth, W.
Fremantle, hon. T. F.
Garfit, T.
Gathorne-Hardy, hn. A.
Giffard, Sir H. S.
Giles, A.
Gorst, J. E.
Gower, hon. E. F. L.
Grant, A.
Gregory, G. B.
Hamilton, rt. hn. Lord G.
Hamilton, hon. R. B.
Hamond, C. F.
Hanbury, R. W.
Harrison, J. F.
Hay, rt. hn. Sir J. C. D.
Herbert, H. A.
Herbert, hon. S.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hill, A. S.
Hinchingbrook, Visc.
Holker, Sir J.
Holland, Sir H. T.
Holt, J. M.
Hope, A. J. B. B.
Hughes, W. B.
Isaac, S.
Kavanagh, A. MacM.
Lawrence, Sir J. C.
Learmonth, A.
Lee, Major V.
Leighton, S.
Leith, J. F.
Leslie, Sir J.
Lewis, O.
Lewisham, Viscount
Lindsay, Colonel R. L.
Lloyd, T. E.
Lopes, Sir M.
Lowther, hon. W.
Lowther rt. hn. J.
Macartney, J. W. E.
Mackintosh, C. F.
M'Garel-Hogg, Sir J.
Manners, rt. hon. Lord J.
Marjoribanks, Sir D. C.
Marten, A. G.
Massey, rt. hon. W. N.
Mellor, T. W.
Merewether, C. G.
Mills, A.
Mills, Sir C. H.
Monk, C. J.
Montgomery, Sir G. G.
Moray, Col. H. D.
Mowbray, rt. hon. J. R.
Muncaster, Lord
Mundella, A. J.
Newdegate, C. N.
Noel, rt. hon. G. J.
Northcote, rt. hn. Sir S. H.
Onslow, D.
Peek, Sir H.
Pender, J.
Percy, Earl
Polhill-Turner, Capt. F.
Price, Captain G. E.
Price, W. E.
Puleston, J. H.
Ralli, P.
Ramsay, J.
Ridley, Sir M. W.
Ripley, H. W.
Ritchie, C. T.
Roberts, J.
Russell, Lord A.
Russell, Sir C.
Sackville, S. G. S.
Salt, T.
Samuelson, B.
Sanderson, T. K.
Sandon, Viscount
Scott, Lord H.
Scott, M. D.
Seely, C.
Selwin - Ibbetson, Sir H. J.
Severne, J. E.
Sidebottom, T. H.
Simon, Serjeant J.
Simonds, W. B.
Smith, F. C.
Smith, rt. hon. W. H.
Smollett, P. B.
Stanhope, hon. E.
Stanley, rt. hn. Col. F.
Stanton, A. J.
Starkey, L. R.
Stewart, M. J.
Sykes, C.
Talbot, C. R. M.
Talbot, J. G.
Taylor, D.
Taylor, rt. hn. Col. T. E.
Tennant, C.
Thwaites, D.
Thynne, Lord H. F.
Tollemache, hon. W. F.
Torrens, W. T. M'C.
Tremayne, Lt.-Col. A.
Vivian, H. H.
Walker, O. O.
Walter, J.
Watney, J.
Watson, rt. hon. W.
Wedderburn, Sir D.
Wheelhouse, W. S. J.
Whitbread, S.
Whitley, E.
Wilmot, Sir H.
Wolff, Sir H. D.
Wynn, C. W. W.
Yarmouth, Earl of
Yeaman, J.

TELLERS.
Dyke, Sir W. H.
Winn, R.

MR. CALLAN was about to propose the Amendment standing in his name, when——

MR. SPEAKER pointed out to the hon. Member that the House had already negatived the Amendment which stood in his name on the Paper, with regard to the Chairman of Ways and Means taking part in carrying out the Resolution. If the Amendment now to be proposed applied to the same subject, the hon. Member could not bring it forward. But if the hon. Member did not propose to raise the same question, then he would be in Order.

MR. CALLAN said, he was just rising to withdraw the first part of his Amendment, and to move the second, which was to the effect that when the Chairman of Committees reported an offence to the Speaker, the Speaker should allow the Member in question to defend himself, withdraw his statements, or make an apology for his conduct during the space of 10 minutes. He did not intend to press the Amendment to a division, and simply recommended it to the consideration of the House. He felt bound, however, to enter his protest against the conduct of the hon. Member for Dungarvan (Mr. O'Donnell), who had been constituted the Leader of the Party in this matter, had got them into this mess, and had then absented himself from the House.

Amendment proposed,

In line 12, after the word "House," to insert the words "when the Member so named shall be permitted to offer such explanation, defence, or apology as he may see fit for a time not exceeding ten minutes, after which." — (*Mr. Callan.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put and *negatived.*

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON thought the House had now arrived at a stage when it was desirable to criticize the wording of the Resolution before it was put from the Chair and agreed to. That he might be in Order in doing so, he should conclude by moving the Amendment which stood on the Paper in the name of the hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Muntz). ["Order!"]

MR. SPEAKER said, he had called by name on all those hon. Members who had Notices of Amendment on the Paper; but if any hon. Member wished to propose an addition to the Resolution it was open to him to do so.

MR. NEWDEGATE said, he had an addition to move to it, which he proposed to explain to the House.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON wished to know whether the Amendment of the hon. Member came before that of the hon. Member for Birmingham?

MR. SPEAKER said, that when he called upon the different Members who had Notices of Amendment on the Paper there had been no answer to the call. It was, nevertheless, competent to any hon. Member to propose an Amendment to any part of the Resolution following the words to which the Amendment of the hon. Member for Dundalk (Mr. Callan) applied.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON observed, that the Amendment of which the hon. Member for Birmingham had given Notice came after that which had just been negatived by the House, and proceeded to move it. His chief object, however, in rising was to make one or two remarks on the latter part of the Resolution, which, if adopted in its present form, might, he was afraid, lead to a very considerable waste of time. It was provided by that part of the Resotion that—

> "If any Member be suspended three times in one Session under this Order, his suspension on the third occasion shall continue for one week, and until a Motion has been made, upon which it shall be decided at one Sitting, by the House, whether the suspension shall then cease, or for what longer period it shall continue; and on the occasion of such Motion, the Member may, if he desires it, be heard in his place."

Now, he did not take exception to the mildness of the penalty which it was proposed to inflict on the offending Member, but to the consequences which were likely to ensue if the matter were to be debated in that House in the way authorized by the Resolution. If a Member were suspended three times in one Session, and the suspension on the third occasion continued for a week, or for a longer time, until a Motion had been made either for relieving him from suspension or for continuing it for a longer time, one of two things would take place. Either the House would be of opinion that the suspension for the one week was sufficient, and that the suspension might be removed, or else they might be of opinion that the offence was of so grave a character as to merit a longer period of suspension. In that case Motion and debate would be necessary; but why, he asked, did the Government insist upon inflicting on the House any debate on the conduct of a Member if, in the judgment of the House, the offence had been sufficiently atoned for by a week's suspension? In short, the effect of the Resolution was that, after a week's suspension, a debate could not be avoided; and that debate, though it might not be long, would not be confined to the conduct of the Member inculpated, but would extend to the conduct of the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees, which it would be in the power of any hon. Member to discuss at length. Those objections to the wording of the Resolution might, he contended, be met by the adoption of a simpler mode of procedure, which would secure that a normal punishment should be inflicted after a second or third offence, without having the matter brought before the House again by a formal Motion, which would lead to a discussion which would be productive of unnecessary waste of time, and of comments on the conduct of the authorities in that House which it was undesirable to provoke. The penalty might be extended to a fortnight or a month, instead of a week, if the House thought fit; but, unless it were the opinion of the House that a still severer punishment was required, the matter ought, in his opinion, to be concluded without any further discussion. Deeming that the Amendment of the hon. Member for Birmingham would improve the clause, he begged to move it to put himself in Order.

Amendment proposed, in line 15, to leave out the words "three times," and insert the word "twice."—(*The Marquess of Hartington.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'three times' stand part of the Question."

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER was well aware that any proposal which the Government might make on so delicate a subject was open to criticism. The terms of the Resolution, however, had been very carefully considered, and he trusted the House would agree to it as it stood. He did not think, he might add, that the criticisms of the noble Lord were by any means unanswerable. The noble Lord admitted that in the event of a Motion being made to extend the punishment beyond the time ordered it would be necessary that a debate should take place, and that was the theory on which the Government had proceeded. They had recognized the importance of giving the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees an opportunity of putting an immediate stop to an offence which required to be dealt with on the spur of the moment; but they had not deemed it right to give any authority, however high, acting upon so short a notice, and possibly in a thin House, unprepared to deal with the question, the power of suspending a Member for a considerable time. That was a serious matter, and one which, in their opinion, ought to be left to the judgment of the House itself. Therefore it was provided that, whenever it was found desirable to propose a more severe sentence, the matter should be brought under the notice of the House, at such an interval of time as would give ample opportunity for the House to know what was really going on, for Members to secure for themselves the consideration of the subject, and for the offending Member himself to consider what course he ought to take—whether to make any submission, or offer any explanation which might satisfy the House. The object of the Government was to shorten the proceeding pointed at by the noble Lord, by providing that a Member should remain suspended until his suspension was taken off. In the case, therefore, of a Motion for the cessation of the suspension, there would in all probability be no lengthened discussion, because everybody would be desirous of shortening the proceedings; while the noble Lord himself saw the expediency of having the question discussed in the event of an increase of the penalty being proposed.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT wished to have some explanation as to the mode of proceeding in the event of a Motion for the cessation or continuance of the suspension of a Member being made. Was the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees to be introduced in any way into the business? They were the persons who had been most conversant with all that had taken place; and he did not know from whom, if not from them, the House could receive that information which it was desirable to receive before it could decide on the matter. But one of the chief difficulties in the case was that which had been pointed out by his noble Friend behind him—that the debate, under the words of the Resolution, would be likely to turn very much on the conduct of those two authorities of the House. There might also be a variety of Motions made for the further suspension of a Member for a week, or a fortnight, or a month; while there would be no certainty as to what the punishment for the offence committed really was. Under these circumstances, the House was, he thought, entitled to have further information from the Government as to the mode of procedure under the Resolution.

Lord JOHN MANNERS said, the purport of the Resolution as a whole could hardly be fairly judged unless each clause of it was taken in its proper sequence. If that were done, the hon. and learned Gentleman would see that each of the three punishments which would be inflicted under the Resolution would be brought about by the action of some Member of the House other than the Speaker or Chairman of Committees. On coming to the final stage the House would, therefore, naturally look, either to the Member who moved on the previous occasion, or to the Leader of the House; and he thought there could be no doubt that neither the Speaker nor the Chairman of Committees would be called on to say a single word on the final proposal that would be made. There was, therefore, no reason why the conduct of the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees should be made the subject of discussion. Indeed, the Resolution had been carefully worded, so, as far as possible, to avoid any contingency of that kind.

Mr. W. E. FORSTER was of opinion that both the noble Lord and the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had somewhat underrated the inconvenience against which his noble Friend behind him wished to guard. An offence which necessitated the suspension of a Member for a week would probably lead to a debate in every case, while any proposal to continue the suspension would certainly give rise to a prolonged discussion. The time of the House would therefore, he thought, be saved if the suggestion of his noble Friend were adopted, and the Resolution were made self-acting.

LORD EDMOND FITZMAURICE asked at what stage of the proceedings of the House was the question of suspension to be entertained—was it to be a question of Privilege?

MR. SYNAN asked, what difference would it make to the House to have its time wasted on the second or third occasion? It was only a question of tweedledum or tweedledee.

MR. EVANS was also of opinion that the Resolution as it stood would have the effect of leading to a considerable waste of the time of the House.

MR. ASSHETON CROSS replied, that the Government, having carefully considered the whole question, were of opinion that the course proposed by the Resolution was the best that could be devised. The suspension of a Member from the discharge of his Parliamentary duties was a very serious matter, and one upon which it was deemed right that the House should have an opportunity of expressing its opinion. He would also point out that the offence against which the Resolution was directed might differ very much in the degree of its enormity according as it was committed one day after another with the obvious intention of despising the Rules of the House, or at longer intervals in the course of a Session; so that the varying degrees of the offence would not be adequately provided for if the Resolution were passed in accordance with the suggestions of the noble Lord opposite. He might add, in answer to the question of the noble Lord (Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice), that a matter of this kind would naturally come on as a question of Privilege.

SIR HENRY JAMES argued that if the Resolution was allowed to remain unaltered, it would be necessary in every case to have a debate before the sentence of suspension could be removed. The whole question of the sentence which had been passed would thus be reviewed, and greater inconvenience would be the result. These Resolutions were aimed at Obstructionists, and not those who wished a matter of this kind to end as soon as possible; and, therefore, every advantage of the Privileges of debate would be taken. It would, in his opinion, be much better that there should be no such discussion.

MR. CALLAN thanked the Government for the merciful consideration they had shown in their reply to the remarks of the noble Marquess the Leader of the Opposition; and he hoped the noble Marquess would see the propriety, after the discussion which had arisen, of withdrawing his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

LORD EDMOND FITZMAURICE moved the insertion, after the word "made," of the words "at the commencement of Public Business," as defining the time at which an offending Member might be heard in his place.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER asked Mr. Speaker if this Amendment was not unnecessary?

MR. SPEAKER: The question will involve and affect the privileges of a Member of this House. I understand that under this Resolution a Member of this House might be suspended for a limited time, and when that time ceases a debate might arise as to the cessation or continuance of that suspension. No doubt, the question, affecting, as it does, the services of a Member, should have precedence as a question of Privilege; and, therefore, the words proposed by the noble Lord are not, in my judgment, necessary.

Amendment proposed, in line 16, after the word "made," to insert the words "at the commencement of Public Business."—(*Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. W. E. FORSTER said, he thought the question which had been brought up in the course of the debate by the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) and other hon. Members required to be cleared up. That question was whether the Resolution did or did not limit the present power of the House to take notice of reprehensible conduct on the part of Members. The Government seemed to think that it did not; but he was inclined to think that some of the words did seem to be a limitation, and as this was not desirable, he moved the addition to the Resolution of these words:—

"Provided always, That nothing in this Resolution shall be taken to deprive the House of the power of proceeding against any Member according to ancient usages."

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the Question, to add the words, "Provided always, That nothing in this Resolution shall be taken to deprive the House of the power of proceeding against any Member according to ancient usages."—(*Mr. William Edward Forster.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR. NEWDEGATE said, he had no objection to the adoption of the words proposed by the right hon. Gentleman, instead of those of a similar effect which he desired to have embodied in the Resolution.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER observed, that the Government would not oppose the Amendment.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question, as amended, put.

MAJOR NOLAN wished to point out that when these Resolutions were carried into effect, Irish Members would find their difficulties in the performance of their duty in that House greatly increased. ["No, no!"] He would give the House an instance of what he meant by pointing out that when he came into Parliament Irish Members were hardly ever put on Committees. They on one occasion, however, challenged every name proposed for a Committee, and the result was that ever since they had their numerical share of Members on Committees. He supposed that if they did that now they would be suspended. [*Cries of* "No!"] When the Irish Members came to London, they found themselves surrounded by an English atmosphere, in which, he supposed, there was the same amount of oxygen as in the Irish atmosphere; but the moral atmosphere by which the Irish Members found themselves surrounded in London was most depressing and demoralizing, and rendered them unfit for a proper discharge of their duties. They had almost nothing to read but English newspapers, and society was in every way possible against the Irish Members. By the Resolution they were now passing, Irish Members would be prevented from discharging their duty to their constituents if the course of duty happened to run counter to English public opinion. The other night the hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Plimsoll) was visited with a *quasi*-censure, because he happened not to belong to the majority. Irish Members ran a double chance, because they were in a minority as regarded either of the great English political Parties. He was quite aware that Irish Members had a great guarantee in the justice and impartiality of the right hon. Gentleman in the Chair; but he verily believed that was their only guarantee when they attempted to press their notions upon the House.

MR. O'DONNELL said, if this Resolution was regarded to any extent as a Party electioneering device, that was distinctly the fault of Her Majesty's present Administration. They gave to this measure a distinct partizan character; they deliberately omitted to consult the Leaders of the Liberal Opposition on the subject. Hitherto it had always been the custom of a Government to consult the Leaders of the Opposition with reference to the Business of the House. As to this Resolution, it was distinctly a part of the Liverpool electioneering manœuvre. Her Majesty's Government pretended that the operation of this Resolution would have the authority of the House; but they, in fact, threw the responsibility of preventing obstruction upon the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees. That might be Ministerial morality; but it seemed to him to be common-place vulgar hypocrisy, and it would not be successful. The whole of the debate had been conducted under the direct terror and menace of an appeal to public opinion against any Member who even ventured to criticize the Resolutions—[*Murmurs of conversation.*]

MR. SULLIVAN asked the Speaker whether his hon. Friend the Member for Dungarvan was in Order in interrupting the conversation of hon. Members opposite?

MR. O'DONNELL, resuming, went on to say that they had compelled the Goverment to show their hands, and they would henceforth treat the matter as a fight between Party and Party. Ministers had furnished the Irish Members with a fresh reason for distrusting the justice and the honesty of the present Advisers of the Crown; and from one end of Ireland to the other the proceedings of the Government would form a staple subject of political canvass long after the next Session. The Irish Members would derive new courage from the unfairness with which they had been treated. He would not even vote against the Resolution proposed by the Government. He had to thank the Government for placing themselves so admirably in the wrong. They had tried to discredit the Liberal Opposition, and they had failed. They had tried to discredit the Irish National Party, and they had failed.

MR. FINIGAN said, the miserable instrument of the Government could not and would not arrest for one moment the progress of national progress in Ireland, and would only add to the number of those who approved of an active policy on the part of Irish Members in the House. The Irish people had suffered from three long centuries of English misrule; but their spirit was not yet dead, and, please God, it never would be. The hope which had animated so many exiles from his country, which had illumined the dungeons of Irish prisoners, which had inspired Irish martyrs on English scaffolds, would not be dimmed by the present miserable instrument introduced by the Government—the hope of an Irish Parliament, and the hope and the right of the Irish people to self-government would still remain. It would only be intensified and quickened, and would make the Irish Members fight and struggle still more strenuously against the injustice of the House.

MR. BIGGAR was rejoiced the Government had now thrown off the mask, so that henceforth Irish Members might understand that questions which came before the House were to be decided not by arguments based upon sound reason, but upon the *ipse dixit* and will of the Government of the day.

MR. CALLAN asked whether suspension from the service of the House would extend to service on a Private Bill Committee?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, if a Member who was serving on a Private Bill Committee were suspended, the matter would be reported by the Chairman of that Committee to the House, in the same manner as if a Member were prevented from voting by any accidental circumstance; and the same course would be taken by the House as was taken in the case of a Member prevented by any accidental reason from serving on a Private Bill Committee.

Resolved, That, whenever any Member shall have been named by the Speaker, or by the Chairman of a Committee of the whole House, as disregarding the authority of the Chair, or abusing the Rules of the House by persistently and wilfully obstructing the business of the House, or otherwise, then, if the offence has been committed in the House, the Speaker shall forthwith put the question, on a Motion being made, no amendment, adjournment, or debate being allowed, 'That such Member be suspended from the service of the House during the remainder of that day's sitting;' and, if the offence has been committed in a Committee of the whole House, the Chairman shall, on a Motion being made, put the same question in a similar way, and if the Motion is carried shall forthwith suspend the proceedings of the Committee and report the circumstance to the House; and the Speaker shall thereupon put the same question, without amendment, adjournment, or debate, as if the offence had been committed in the House itself. If any Member be suspended three times in one Session, under this Order, his suspension on the third occasion shall continue for one week, and until a Motion has been made, upon which it shall be decided, at one sitting, by the House, whether the suspension shall then cease, or for what longer period it shall continue; and, on the occasion of such Motion, the Member may, if he desires it, be heard in his place: Provided always, That nothing in this Resolution shall be taken to deprive the House of the power of proceeding against any Member according to ancient usages.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the said Resolution be a Standing Order of this House."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

MR. DILLWYN, in moving—

"That, in the last Session of a Parliament, it is inexpedient to constitute an untried experiment by which the proceedings of Parliament may be materially altered, and the privileges of Members lessened, as a Standing Order of the House,"

said, that a Standing Order was a permanent Order; and, therefore, before it was finally decided on, he thought it was necessary that there should be some experience of its working. He must take exception to the speech of the Home Secretary in the previous night's debate, where he said the action of the Opposition was unpatriotic in not more strongly supporting the Government than they had done. He did think that the House had considered the matter in a very calm manner, and complained that what suggestions had been offered to the Government had not been met in a friendly and conciliatory spirit as they ought to have been, and suggested Amendments had been refused which he believed would ultimately have to be adopted if the Resolution was to be of practical value. He was of opinion, therefore, that the Resolution should be made a Sessional Order, as it would probably have to be altered; and anything which related to the rights and privileges of Members of Parliament ought to be looked upon as needing very calm deliberation and anxious thought, and ought not to be decided hurriedly. He appealed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer as the Leader of that House to give his proposal a favourable consideration. He did not think it wise for a Parliament which stood somewhat discredited with the country to pass Rules which should bind its successors.

Mr. COURTNEY, in seconding the Amendment, said, it was true that a Standing Order might be altered; but it would have to be a very bad one indeed before that was done. A Sessional Order, on the other hand, would be tried, and any defects it might have speedily remedied. He attributed a good deal of the importance attached to obstruction to the disproportionate notice given to this matter in the newspapers, in comparison with the brief records of the serious Business of the House.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the last Session of a Parliament, it is inexpedient to constitute an untried experiment by which the proceedings of Parliament may be materially altered, and the privileges of Members lessened, as a Standing Order of the House,"—(*Mr. Dillwyn,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, it seemed to him that the two hon. Members, and perhaps some other hon. Gentlemen, were under the impression that there was something very mysterious about a Standing Order of that House which made it unalterable, like an order of the Medes and Persians. He did not understand that by making this Resolution a Standing Order they deprived themselves of the power of amending it in any way that might be necessary. What they did by making it a Standing Order was this—they rendered it unnecessary at the beginning of a Session to go over the whole ground again to make it an Order of the House. Looking at the matter as Members of Parliament, and not of a Party, he thought it would be a great error to make this Resolution a mere Sessional Order, and leave the question to be done all over again at the commencement of the next Parliament. Having seen the rise and growth of this evil of obstruction, he thought it was their duty to leave a remedy for it to the next Parliament, which could cancel or alter it if necessary.

Mr. W. E. FORSTER, after much consideration, could not support the Amendment of his hon. Friend the Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn), that this Order should be merely a Sessional one. He agreed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that they were providing a remedy for an evil of which the growth, if not the origin, had taken place in this Parliament, and it was their duty to provide a safeguard against a danger which they believed to exist. The debate had very clearly shown that that danger was obstruction, not of special legislation, but of the ordinary Business of Parliament, and it would not be right if they did not leave on record their view of the way in which it ought to be dealt with. If the next Parliament found that experience was against the remedy, or that the feelings of their constituents or themselves were opposed to it, nothing would be more easy than for them to alter it.

Mr. NEWDEGATE said the Resolution, when recorded, would show that this Parliament had been impeded for three years. He hoped the hon. Member for Swansea would not press his Amendment to a division.

Question put.

The House *divided:*—Ayes 166; Noes 20: Majority 146.—(Div. List, No. 29.)

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Ordered, That the said Resolution be a Standing Order of this House.

BEER DEALERS' RETAIL LICENCES BILL.—[BILL 65.]

(*Mr. Ritchie, Mr. Gorst, Mr. W. M. Torrens, Mr. Mundella.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

MR. RYLANDS reminded the Government of their promise last Session that no Private Bill should be taken at a Saturday Sitting. He hoped the hon. Member who had charge of the Bill would not press it.

MR. RITCHIE said, he would certainly not stand in the way of the opinion of the House. The Bill, however, was of great importance; and if it was to pass into law, it was exceedingly desirable that this should be done without any unnecessary delay; because since the Bill had been introduced to the House no less than between 2,000 and 3,000 applications had been made for these licences in the Metropolitan district. These applications would all come on for adjudication next month; and what he desired to do was to place the power which had been asked for by every bench of magistrates in the country in their hands before they came to decide upon all those applications. He hoped the opposition which had been notified would be withdrawn, and that the Bill would come on another night.

Committee *deferred* till *Monday* next.

House adjourned at a quarter
before Seven o'clock till
Monday next.

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TO

HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

VOLUME CCL.

FIRST VOLUME OF SESSION 1880.

Explanation of the Abbreviations.

In Bills, Read 1°, 2°, 3°, or 1ª, 2ª, 3ª, Read the First, Second, or Third Time.—In Speeches, 1R., 2R., 3R., Speech delivered on the First, Second, or Third Reading.—*Amendt.*, Amendment.—*Res.*, Resolution.—*Comm.*, Committee.—*Re-Comm.*, Re-Committal.—*Rep.*, Report.—*Consid.*, Consideration.—*Adj.*, Adjournment or Adjourned.—*cl.*, Clause.—*add. cl.*, Additional Clause.—*neg.*, Negatived.—*M. Q.*, Main Question.—*O. Q.*, Original Question.—*O. M.*, Original Motion.—*P. Q.*, Previous Question.—R. P., Report Progress.—*A.*, Ayes.—*N.*, Noes.—*M.*, Majority.—1*st. Div.*, 2*nd. Div.*, First or Second Division.—*l.*, Lords.—*c.*, Commons.

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When in the Text or in the Index a Speech is marked thus *, it indicates that the Speech is reprinted from a Pamphlet or some authorized Report.

When in the Index a † is prefixed to a Name or an Office (the Member having accepted or vacated office during the Session) and to Subjects of Debate thereunder, it indicates that the Speeches on those Subjects were delivered in the speaker's private or official character, as the case may be.

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  c. Ordered; read 1º* *Feb* 23 [Bill 85]

Census (Scotland) Bill (*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Secretary Cross*)
  c. Ordered; read 1º* *Feb* 23 [Bill 86]

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Charities (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. Meldon, Mr. Errington*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 17 [Bill 78]

Charity Commission, The—Sittings of the Board
Question, Mr. Pemberton; Answer, Lord George Hamilton *Feb* 26, 1439

Charity Expenses and Accounts Bill
Question, Mr. W. H. James; Answer, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson *Feb* 12, 508

CHARLEY, Mr. W. T., *Salford*
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Chester Gas Bill
Standing Order 109 read *Feb* 27, 1565
Moved, That the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means be discharged from attendance on the Chester Gas Bill, and that the Chairman of the Committee on Standing Orders be appointed Chairman of the Committee on the said Bill (*The Chairman of Ways and Means*); Motion agreed to

CHILDERS, Right Hon. H. C. E., *Pontefract*
Chartered Banks (Colonial), 2R. 575
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CHURCHILL, Lord R., *Woodstock*
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Church of England—Sale of Livings—The Royal Commission
Question, Mr. Leatham; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross *Feb* 19, 922

Civil Service Writers
Question, Sir Joseph M'Kenna; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 16, 677; Question, Mr. Finigan; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer, 684

Coal Mines—The Leycett Colliery Explosion
Moved, That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for Report of the inquiry into the Leycett Colliery explosion (*The Earl De La Warr*) *Feb* 13, 583; after short debate, on Question? resolved in the negative
Question, Mr. Macdonald; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross *Feb* 23, 1191

Coal Mines—The Leycett Colliery Explosion
Question, Earl De La Warr; Answer, Earl Beauchamp *Feb* 27, 1545
Moved that there be laid before the House, Report of William St. James Wheelhouse, Esq., Q.C., M.P., on the Leycett Colliery Accident of September 1879 (*The Earl De La Warr*); Motion agreed to

Cogan, Right Hon. W. H. F., *Kildare*
Relief of Distress (Ireland), 2R. 555

Colebrooke, Sir T. E., *Lanarkshire, N.*
Parliament—Privilege of Parliament—Immunity from Arrest, Res. 1311

Collins, Mr. E., *Kinsale*
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 419

Colonial Chartered Banking Companies Bill—*Afterwards*
Chartered Banks (Colonial) Bill
(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*)
c. Considered in Committee; Resolution agreed to, and reported; Bill ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 4]
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *Feb* 12, 567
Amendt. to leave out "now," and add "upon this day six months" (*Mr. Ramsay*); Question proposed, "That 'now,' &c.;" after short debate, Amendt. withdrawn
Main Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2°, and committed to a Select Committee
Committee nominated *Feb* 20; List of the Committee, 577

Colthurst, Colonel D. La Zouche, *Cork Co.*
Ireland — Distress — Presentment Sessions — Loans for Sanitary Works, 515
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 178
Relief of Distress (Ireland), 2R. 541

Commerce and Free Trade
Amendt. on Committee of Supply *Feb* 13, To leave out from "That," and add "a Select Committee be appointed to consider the Commercial Relations at present existing between England and Foreign Nations, especially with regard to the import of Manufactured Goods from Abroad, as well as the effect caused by our system of one-sided so-called Free Trade, with a view (if possible) of permanently ameliorating the position of the wage classes of this Country" (*Mr. Wheelhouse*) *v.*, 604; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after short debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Newdegate*); after further short debate, Question put, and negatived; after further debate, Question put, "That the words, &c.;" A. 75, N. 6; M. 69 (D. L. 5)

Common Law Procedure and Judicature Acts Amendment Bill
(*Mr. Gregory, Mr. Waddy, Mr. Wheelhouse, Mr. Ridley*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 17 [Bill 80]
Read 2°* *Feb* 25

Commons
Select Committee appointed *Feb* 9
Committee nominated *Feb* 20; List of the Committee, 373

Commons Act (1876) Amendment Bill
(*Mr. Mundella, Sir Henry Peek, Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 9 [Bill 61]
Read 2°, after short debate *Feb* 18, 899

Companies Acts Amendment Bill
(*Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Coope, Mr. Herschell, Sir Charles Mills*)
c. Acts considered in Committee; Resolution agreed to, and reported; Bill ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 52]
Read 2° *Feb* 10, 386
Committee*; Report *Feb* 13
Read 3°* *Feb* 16
l. Read 1ª* (*The Lord Aberdare*) *Feb* 17 (No. 9)
Read 2ª, after short debate *Feb* 24, 1276

Companies Act, 1879—*Joint Stock Banks*
Question, Mr. Heygate; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 26, 1440

Contagious Diseases Acts
Select Committee re-appointed, "to inquire into the Contagious Diseases Acts, 1866—1869, their Administration, Operation, and Effect" *Feb* 17; List of the Committee, 885

Conveyancing and Law of Property Bill
[H.L.] (*The Lord Chancellor*)
l. Presented; read 1ª *Feb* 23, 1164 (No. 15)

Co-operative Stores
Select Committee of last Session re-appointed, "to inquire into the constitution and operations of certain Trading Societies, trading under the name of Co-operative Stores, and to ascertain whether they are exempted from taxes and imposts to which the trading community are liable" *Feb* 24; List of the Committee, 1384

Copyright, Law of—Legislation
Question, Mr. Hanbury Tracy; Answer, Lord John Manners *Feb* 10, 382

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Corry, Mr. J. P., *Belfast*
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Cotton, Mr. Alderman W. J. R., *London*
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Gaslight and Coke, Commercial Gas, and South Metropolitan Gaslight and Coke Companies, 2R. 783
Leases, 2R. Amendt. 892
Relief of Distress (Ireland), 2R. 555

County Courts Bill (*Mr. Norwood, Mr. Rowley Hill, Mr. Watkin Williams, Sir Eardley Wilmot*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 6]
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *Feb* 25, 1385
Amendt. to leave out "now," and add "upon this day six months" (*Mr. Wheelhouse*); Question proposed, "That 'now,' &c.;" after debate, Amendt. withdrawn
Main Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2°

County Infirmaries (Ireland) Bill (*Mr. Meldon, Mr. Dease, Mr. Errington, Mr. John George MacCarthy*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 55]

Courtney, Mr. L. H., *Liskeard*
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Cowen, Mr. J., *Newcastle-on-Tyne*
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Cranbrook, Viscount (Secretary of State for India)
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Criminal Code Bill (*Mr. Attorney General, Mr. Solicitor General, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland*)
c. Motion for Leave (*Mr. Attorney General*) *Feb* 6, 244; Motion agreed to; Bill ordered; read 1° * [Bill 2]
Read 2°, and referred to a Select Committee, after short debate *Feb* 23, 1236

Criminal Code (No. 2) Bill (*Mr. Wheelhouse, Mr. Serjeant Spinks, Captain Pim*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 47]

Criminal Law
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Cheetham Prison, Execution in, Moved for, Copy of the presentment of the jury empanelled to sit on the body of William Cassidy, executed in Cheetham Prison, with respect to the admission of reporters to the prison (*The Lord Houghton*) *Feb* 24, 1277; Motion agreed to

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Capital Punishment—The Prisons Act, 1868—*Execution in Cheetham Gaol, Manchester*, Question, Mr. Pease; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross *Feb* 23, 1187
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Cruelty to Animals Bill (*Mr. Holt, Mr. Ashley, Mr. Hardcastle, Sir Eardley Wilmot, Mr. Charles Wilson*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 25 [Bill 88]

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Question, Mr. Pease ; Answer, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson *Feb* 19, 911

Customs Civil Service Writers
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(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. James Lowther*)
c. Ordered ; read 1°* *Feb* 25 [Bill 91]

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(*Mr. Stanley Leighton, Mr. Whitwell, Mr. Goldney, Mr. Hardcastle*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 35]

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Elective County Boards (Ireland) Bill
(*Major Nolan, Mr. Fay, Mr. O'Clery, Mr. O'Sullivan*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 9 [Bill 64]

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Employers and Workmen Act (1875) (Extension to Seamen) Bill
(*Mr. Burt, Mr. Joseph Cowen, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Gourley, Mr. Gorst*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 29]

Employers Liability Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Chancellor*)
l. Presented; read 1ª, after short debate *Feb* 9, 260 (No. 4)
Read 2ª, and referred to a Select Committee, after short debate *Feb* 12, 486
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Employers' Liability for Injuries to Servants Bill (*Mr. Macdonald, Dr. Cameron, Mr. Burt, Mr. Meldon, Mr. Earp*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 22]

Employers' Liability (Railway Servants) Bill (*Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Brassey, Mr. Morley, Mr. Bass*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 57]

Entail and Settlement Bill
(*Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Mr. Osborne Morgan, Mr. Wentworth Beaumont, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Herschell*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 40]

Epping Forest Act (1878) (Continuance) Bill (*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. Gerard Noel*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 12 [Bill 73]
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Excisable Liquors Traffic (Scotland) Bill
(*Dr. Cameron, Lord Colin Campbell, Mr. Dalrymple, Mr. James Stewart, Mr. Orr Ewing, Mr. Grant, Mr. Yeaman*)
c. Considered in Committee; Resolution agreed to, and reported; Bill ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 49]
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Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1678, 1701; Amendt. 1702

FORSTER, Right Hon. W. E., *Bradford*
India—Afghanistan—Expenses of the War, 473
Municipal Corporations (Property Qualification Abolition), 2R. 898
Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1606, 1700, 1702, 1708
Parliament—Privilege—Interference of Peers in Elections—Hon. Major Jocelyn, Res. 1211
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 290, 294, 295
Seed Potatoes (Ireland), Consid. *cl.* 6, 880
Turkey—Slave Trade Treaty, 267

FORTESCUE, Earl
School Board Elections—Elections of Guardians of the Poor, Motion for Returns, 378

FRASER, Sir W. A., *Kidderminster*
Parliament—Privilege of Parliament—Immunity from Arrest, Res. 1315
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 388
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 9, 1014

FRESHFIELD, Mr. C. K., *Dover*
Army—84th Regiment, 267
India Stock—Powers of Attorney, 1104
Leases, 2R. 894

FRY, Mr. L., *Bristol*
Customs Re-organization, 1102

GABBETT, Mr. D. F., *Limerick*
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, Motion for Adjournment, 362

Gallery of Casts from the Antique
Moved that there be laid before the House, a memorial presented to the Prime Minister in August 1877 by a Committee presided over by the Duke of Westminster on the subject of the formation of a Gallery of Casts from the Antique:
Also, a communication from the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to the Duke of Westminster on the same subject dated 16th July 1879 (*The Earl Cowper*) *Feb* 27, 1541; after short debate, Motion agreed to

Game Laws—Legislation
Question, Sir David Wedderburn; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross *Feb* 27, 1565

Gaslight and Coke, Commercial Gas, and South Metropolitan Gaslight and Coke Companies Bill (by Order)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" (*Mr. Alderman Cotton*) *Feb* 17, 784
Amendt. to leave out "now," and add "upon this day six months" (*Colonel Makins*); Question proposed, "That 'now,' &c.;" after short debate, Amendt. withdrawn
Main Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2°

General Police and Improvement (Scotland) Provisional Order (Broughty Ferry) Bill
(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Secretary Cross*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 19 [Bill 83]

GIBSON, Right Hon. E., (Attorney General for Ireland), *Dublin University*
Borough Franchise (Ireland), Res. 860
Criminal Law (Ireland)—Assault on Lord Fermoy, 379
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 357, 361
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 3, 769, 770, 925, 931, 963, 985; *cl.* 4, 989; *cl.* 9, 998, 1003, 1007; Consid. *add. cl.* 1227, 1230; *cl.* 3, 1232; Amendt. *ib.*; *cl.* 4, Amendt. 1233
Seed Potatoes (Ireland), Consid. *cl.* 6, 881

GIFFARD, Sir H. S. (see SOLICITOR GENERAL, The)

GILES, Mr. A., *Southampton*
Borough Franchise (Ireland), Res. 845

GLADSTONE, Right Hon. W. E., *Greenwich*
Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1587
Parliament — Duration of Parliament, Res. 1317, 1318
Parliament—Privilege of Parliament—Immunity from Arrest, Res. 1315

Glebe Loan (Ireland) Amendment Act (1878) Amendment Bill
(*Mr. Errington, Mr. O'Conor, Mr. Dease*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 19 [Bill 81]

Gordon, Sir A., *Aberdeenshire, E.*
India—Afghanistan—Treaty of Gandamak, 147
Poor Law (Scotland), 810

Gorst, Mr. J. E., *Chatham*
India—Afghanistan—Expenses of the War, 465
Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1659

Goschen, Right Hon. G. J., *London*
Bankruptcy Law Amendment, 2R. 562

Gourley, Mr. E. T., *Sunderland*
India—Afghanistan—Military Equipments, 912
Merchant Ships Laden in Bulk, Motion for a Select Committee, 1371, 1381
Seed Potatoes (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 6, 656
Treaty of Washington — Canadian and Newfoundland Fisheries, 512

Granville, Earl
Employers Liability, 1R. 263
India—Afghanistan—Policy of the Government, Address for Papers, 1086, 1089
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 20, 46
Persia and Herat, 375, 582
Russia—Explosion at the Winter Palace, 901
Tripartite Treaty of 1856, 777

Gray, Mr. E. D., *Tipperary*
Borough Franchise (Ireland), Res. 819, 823
Local Government Board (Ireland), 1192
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 340
Post Office—Private Telegraph Wires, 1191, 1192
Relief of Distress (Ireland), 1195
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 9, 1003, 1004, 1005

Greece
Brigandage in Acarnania, Question, Mr. J. R. Yorke; Answer, Mr. Bourke *Feb* 12, 511
Capture of Colonel and Mrs. Synge by Brigands, Question, Mr. H. Samuelson; Answer, Mr. Bourke *Feb* 23, 1198
The Papers, Question, Mr. Chamberlain; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 6, 152; Question, Mr. Chamberlain; Answer, Mr. Bourke *Feb* 9, 268

Gregory, Mr. G. B., *Sussex, E.*
Arms, Carrying of—Revolvers, 379
Bankruptcy Law Amendment, 2R. 562
County Courts, 2R. 1403
Leases, 2R. 894
Parliament—Privilege of Parliament—Immunity from Arrest, Res. 1312
Supply—New Courts of Justice and Offices, 1251, 1255

Gun Licence Act (1870) Amendment Bill
(*Sir Alexander Gordon, Mr. Clare Read, Mr. M'Lagan, Mr. Mark Stewart*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 11 [Bill 69]

Hamilton, Marquess of, *Donegal Co.*
Relief of Distress (Ireland), 2R. 551

Hamilton, Lord G. F. (Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education), *Middlesex*
Charity Commission—Sittings of the Board, 1439
Education Department—Mr. Hullah's Report, 269
Educational Returns, 915
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 3, 737

Hammond, Lord
India — Afghanistan — Policy of the Government, Address for Papers, 1074

Hanbury, Mr. R. W., *Staffordshire, N.*
Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1502, 1540
Parliament — Duration of Parliament, Res. 1346
Sugar Bounties — Negotiations with Foreign Powers, 1104

Hankey, Mr. T., *Peterborough*
Post Office—New Penny Postage Stamp, 682, 683

Harcourt, Sir W. G. V., *Oxford City*
Borough Franchise (Ireland), Res. 854, 859
India — Afghanistan — Expenses of the War, 466, 468, 470
Parliament—Privilege—Mr. Plimsoll, 1114; Previous Question moved, 1119, 1121
Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 371, 372
Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1519, 1655, 1656, 1689, 1699
Parliament—Privilege—Interference of Peers in Elections—Hon. Major Jocelyn, Res. Previous Question moved, 1203
Treaty Guarantees, 638

Hardcastle, Mr. E., *Lancashire, S.E.*
Parliament—Privilege—Mr. Plimsoll, 1135
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Hardwicke, Earl of
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 56

Hardy, Mr. A. Gathorne, *Canterbury*
County Courts, 2R. 1406
Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1680

Harman, Colonel E. R., King-, *Sligo*
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Comm. 703; *cl.* 3, 754, 760
Seed Potatoes (Ireland), Consid. *cl.* 6, 880, 882

HARTINGTON, Right Hon. Marquess of, *New Radnor*
Home Rule, Personal Explanation, 687
Parliament—Miscellaneous Questions
Privilege—Mr. Plimsoll, Motion for Adjournment, 805, 808, 1185
Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 81, 82, 134, 344, 361, 370
Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1463, 1650, 1684, 1696, 1697
Parliament — Orders of the Day—Standing Order of Supply and Ways and Means, Res. 1574
Parliament — Privilege—London Newspapers, Res. 1223
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HAVELOCK, Sir H. M., *Sunderland*
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HAY, Admiral Right Hon. Sir J. C. D., *Stamford*
Army (India)—Kirwee Prize Money, 510
Merchant Ships Laden in Bulk, Motion for a Select Committee, 1369
Navy—Colonial Allowance to Navy and Royal Marine Officers, 268
Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1605

HENNIKER, Lord
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HENRY, Mr. Mitchell, *Galway Co.*
Parliament—Privilege—Mr. Plimsoll, 1154
Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 129; Motion for Adjournment, 237, 270, 272, 295, 302, 369
Relief of Distress (Ireland), 1194
Relief of Distress (Ireland), 2R. 546; Comm. *cl.* 3, 747, 756, 762, 768, 769, 936, 971
Seed Potatoes (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 6, Amendt. 657, 658, 659, 661; *cl.* 7, *ib.*; *cl.* 8, Amendt. 662; *cl.* 9, 664; *cl.* 13, 665, 667, 772; Consid. Amendt. 878, 881

HERBERT, Mr. H. A., *Kerry Co.*
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Consid. *add. cl.* 1228

HERMON, Mr. E., *Preston*
Commerce and Free Trade, Motion for a Select Committee, 637
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 306

HERSCHELL, Mr. F., *Durham*
Parliament—Privilege of Parliament—Immunity from Arrest, Res. 1309

HEYGATE, Mr. W. U., *Leicestershire, S.*
Companies Act, 1879 — Joint Stock Banks, 1440

HIBBERT, Mr. J. T., *Oldham*
County Courts, 2R. 1398
Criminal Law — Admission of Reporters at Executions, 919
Liverpool Corporation Water, 2R. 1282
Post Office—Post Office Savings Bank Regulations, 1297
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 3, 927, 947; *cl.* 4, 989

HILL, Mr. A. Staveley, *Staffordshire, W.*
Licensing Laws Amendment, Leave, 877
Liverpool Corporation Water, 2R. Amendt. 1278, 1294

HOGG, Lt.-Colonel Sir J. M'GAREL-, *Truro*
Gaslight and Coke, Commercial Gas, and South Metropolitan Gaslight and Coke Companies, 787

HOLKER, Sir J. (*see* ATTORNEY GENERAL, The)

HOLMS, Mr. J., *Hackney*
Army—South Africa—Natal and the Transvaal — Alleged Misconduct of the British Troops, 590
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HOLMS, Mr. W., *Paisley*
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HOPWOOD, Mr. C. H., *Stockport*
Army—Regulation of Correspondents in the Field, 1296, 1297, 1567
Criminal Code, 2R. 1244
Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1679

HOUGHTON, Lord
Execution in Cheetham Prison, Address for a Paper, 1277
Workmen's Compensation, 1R. 377

Hours of Polling (Boroughs) Bill
(*Mr. Chamberlain, Sir Charles W. Dilke, Mr. Mundella, Dr. Cameron, Major Nolan, Mr. Henry Samuelson*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 39]

HOWARD, Mr. E. S., *Cumberland, E.*
Salmon Fisheries—Solway Fisheries, 1297

Hypothec Abolition (Scotland) Bill
(*Mr. Agnew, Mr. Baillie Hamilton, Sir George Douglas*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 34]
Read 2°, after debate *Feb* 25, 1410

INDIA

Army—Kirwee Prize Money, Question, Sir John Hay; Answer, Mr. E. Stanhope *Feb* 12, 510

Despatch of 1869—"*The Empress of India*," Question, Sir H. Drummond Wolff; Answer, Mr. E. Stanhope *Feb* 6, 146; Personal Explanation, The Duke of Argyll *Feb* 9, 254

Emigration of Coolies to La Réunion, Question, Mr. Errington; Answer, Mr. E. Stanhope *Feb* 16, 678

India Office—Shipping Contracts, Questions, Mr. Puleston, Mr. E. Jenkins; Answers, Mr. E. Stanhope *Feb* 26, 1443

India Stock—Powers of Attorney, Question, Mr. Freshfield; Answer, Mr. E. Stanhope *Feb* 20, 1104

Indigo Cultivation in Behar, Question, Mr. O'Donnell; Answer, Mr. E. Stanhope *Feb* 26, 1444

Medical Staff, Question, Mr. Lyon Playfair; Answer, Mr. E. Stanhope *Feb* 26, 1435

Popular Representation, Observations, Sir David Wedderburn; Reply, Mr. E. Stanhope; Observations, Sir George Campbell *Feb* 13, 593

The Indian Press—Newspaper Correspondents in the Field, Question, Sir Charles W. Dilke; Answer, Mr. E. Stanhope *Feb* 17, 791

The Naga Hill Tribes, Question, Mr. Dalrymple; Answer, Mr. E. Stanhope *Feb* 16, 681

The Wynaad Gold Fields, Question, Mr. Puleston; Answer, Mr. E. Stanhope *Feb* 27, 1568

India Stock (Powers of Attorney) Bill
(*Mr. Edward Stanhope, Lord George Hamilton*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 27 [Bill 93]

Indian Salaries and Allowances Bill
(*Mr. Edward Stanhope, Lord George Hamilton*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 12 [Bill 72]
Read 2° * *Feb* 23
Committee *; Report *Feb* 26
Read 3° * *Feb* 27

Inhabited House Duty and Income Tax Bill (*Mr. Hubbard, Mr. Sampson Lloyd, Mr. Leatham, Sir Charles Forster*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 11. [Bill 70]

Intemperance, The Lords Committee on—The Recommendations
Question, Sir Wilfrid Lawson; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 9, 267

Intestates Real Estate Bill
(*Mr. Potter, Mr. Leatham, Mr. Price, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Hopwood*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 13]

IRELAND

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

Board of Works—Clare Castle Harbour and Pier, Question, Mr. Finigan; Answer, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson *Feb* 19, 918;—*Consolidation Acts*, Question, Mr. P. Martin; Answer, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson *Feb* 12, 518

Crime—Attack on Tenant Right Meeting at Portadown, Question, Mr. O'Donnell; Answer, Mr. J. Lowther *Feb* 27, 1570

Criminal Law—The Assault on Lord Fermoy, Question, Mr. O'Sullivan; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland *Feb* 10, 379

Evictions, Notice of Questions, Mr. O'Donnell *Feb* 10, 384

Grand Juries and Presentment Sessions, Question, Sir Thomas M'Clure; Answer, Mr. J. Lowther *Feb* 16, 685

Home Rule, Personal Explanation, Viscount Castlereagh; Observations, The Marquess of Hartington *Feb* 16, 686

"*Home Rulers*" *Members of this House*, Question, Mr. Sullivan; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 16, 682

Irish Poor Law Unions and the Seed Supply Bill, Question, Major Nolan; Answer, Mr. J. Lowther *Feb* 20, 1108

Landlord and Tenant—Notice to Quit, Question, The O'Donoghue; Answer, Mr. J. Lowther *Feb* 23, 1188

Lighthouses (*West Coast*), Question, Mr. Lea; Answer, Viscount Sandon *Feb* 26, 1435

Local Government Board, Question, Mr. Gray; Answer, Mr. J. Lowther *Feb* 23, 1192

Poor Law—The Union of Bailieboro, Question, Mr. Biggar; Answer, Mr. J. Lowther *Feb* 19, 908

Post Office—Emyvale, Question, Mr. Sullivan; Answer, Lord John Manners *Feb* 19, 918

Potato Crop, Select Committee appointed, "to inquire into the best means of diminishing the frequency and extent of failures in the Potato Crop" (*Major Nolan*) *Feb* 10

Prisons—Abolition of Spike Island Convict Prison, Question, Mr. O'Connor Power; Answer, Mr. J. Lowther *Feb* 16, 685

The Commissioners of National Education—Female Education in Galway, Questions, Mr. P. Martin; Answers, Mr. J. Lowther *Feb* 20, 1107

Ireland—Borough Franchise
Moved, "That the restricted nature of the Borough Franchise in Ireland as compared with that existing in England and in Scotland is a subject deserving the immediate attention of Parliament, with a view of establishing a fair and just equality of the franchise in the three countries" (*Mr. Meldon*) *Feb* 17, 811
Amendt. to leave out from "That," and add "it is inexpedient to deal with the question of lowering the franchise in Ireland" (*Mr. Charles Lewis*) *v.*; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after long debate, Question put; A. 188, N. 242; M. 54 (D. L. 10)
Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to

Ireland, State of
Moved, That there be laid before the House, "Return of the number of ejectments from agricultural holdings that have been served,

[*cont.*

Ireland, State of—cont.
the number in which decrees have been pronounced, and the number in which decrees have been executed in each county in Ireland every year from the 1st of January 1860 to the 1st of January 1880; the Return to distinguish between ejectments for non-payment of rent, or on notice to quit, or for breach of contract, or for any other cause: Also, Return of the number of cases of intimidation in Ireland to prevent the payment of rent or occupation of land which came under the notice of the police during the year 1879, and the number of prosecutions undertaken and convictions obtained in such cases" (*The Earl of Dunraven*) *Feb* 27, 1545; after short debate, Motion withdrawn
[See title *Relief of Distress* (*Ireland*)

Jackson, Sir H. M., *Coventry*
Commerce and Free Trade, Motion for a Select Committee, 616

James, Sir H., *Taunton*
Bankruptcy Law Amendment, 2R. 560
County Courts, 2R. 1409
Criminal Code, 2R. 1242, 1248
Parliament—Privilege—Mr. Plimsoll, 1134
Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1701
Parliament—Privilege of Parliament—Immunity from Arrest, Res. 1313
Supreme Court of Judicature Acts — The Assizes, 809

James, Mr. W. H., *Gateshead*
Charity Expenses and Accounts, 508
City of London—Gratuities to Officers of the Corporation, 1193
Parochial Charities—City of London—Report of Royal Commission, 508
Supply—Charity Commission for England and Wales, 1267, 1270

Jenkins, Mr. D. J., *Penryn, &c.*
Merchant Ships Laden in Bulk, Motion for a Select Committee, 1375

Jenkins, Mr. E., *Dundee*
India Office—Shipping Contracts, 1444
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 117
Parliament—Privilege—Interference of Peers in Elections—Hon. Major Jocelyn, Res. 1208
Turkey—Correspondence as to Ahmed Tewfik and Dr. Koella, 269
Murder of Mr. Ogle, 1571

Judicial Factors (Scotland) Bill
(*Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Baxter, Sir Graham Montgomery, Mr. Dalrymple*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 50]
Read 2° * *Feb* 25

Kavanagh, Mr. A. M., *Carlow Co.*
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 3, 947

Kay-Shuttleworth, Sir U. J., *Hastings*
Educational Returns, 915

Kimberley, Earl of
Africa, South—Basutoland, 258
Ireland, Distress in, 505
Ireland, State of, Motion for Returns, 1563
Tripartite Treaty of 1856, 780

Kirk, Mr. G. H., *Louth*
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 3, 974; Consid. *add cl.* 1228

Knatchbull-Hugessen, Right Hon. E. H., *Sandwich*
Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1613

Landed Proprietors (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. P. J. Smyth, Mr. Martin, Mr. Fay, The O'Donoghue*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 45]

Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Act (1870) Amendment Bill
(*Mr. Daniel Taylor, Sir Thomas M'Clure, Mr. Benjamin Whitworth, Mr. Lea*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 31]

Lansdowne, Marquess of
Seeds (Ireland), Comm. 1183

Law, Right Hon. H., *Londonderry Co.*
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 397
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 3, 927; Amendt. 935, 939, 946, 962; *cl.* 9, 1013; Amendt. 1160; *cl.* 14, Amendt. *ib.*

Law and Justice
Instruction of the Police in Ambulance Drill, Question, Mr. Elliot; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross *Feb* 27, 1572
Supreme Court of Judicature Acts — The Assizes, Question, Sir Henry James; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross *Feb* 17, 809

Law of Ejectment Suspension (Ireland) Bill (*Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Kirk, Mr. O'Sullivan, Mr. O'Shaughnessy*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 11]

Lawson, Sir W., *Carlisle*
Intemperance, Lords Committee on, 267
Merchant Shipping—Grain Cargoes, 1447
Parliament—Public Business, 386

Leases Bill (*Mr. Marten, Sir Henry Jackson, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Charles Lewis*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 30]
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *Feb* 18, 886
Amendt. to leave out "now," and add "upon this day six months" (*Mr. Alderman Cotton*); Question proposed, "That 'now,' &c.;" after short debate, Amendt. withdrawn
Main Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2°, and committed to a Select Committee
Committee nominated *Mar* 2; List of the Committee, 895

LEA, Mr. T., *Donegal*
Lighthouses, Ireland (West Coast), 1435

LEATHAM, Mr. E. A., *Huddersfield*
Church of England—Sale of Livings—Royal Commission, 922

LECHMERE, Sir E., *Worcestershire, W.*
Liverpool Corporation Water, 2R. 1291

LEFEVRE, Mr. G. J. Shaw, *Reading*
Merchant Ships Laden in Bulk, Motion for a Select Committee, 1370
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 221, 323
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Leave, 241; Comm. *cl.* 3, Amendt. 726, 925

LEIGHTON, Sir B., *Shropshire, S.*
Liverpool Corporation Water, 2R. 1286, 1294

LEIGHTON, Mr. S., *Shropshire, N.*
Ancient Monuments, Comm. *cl.* 2, Amendt. 773

LEWIS, Mr. C. E., *Londonderry*
Borough Franchise (Ireland), Res. 823; Amendt. 825, 835
Parliament—Privilege—Mr. Plimsoll, 1142, 1143
Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 196
Parliament—Privilege—Interference of Peers in Elections—Hon. Major Jocelyn, Res. 1208
Parliament—Privilege of Parliament—Immunity from Arrest, Res. Amendt. 1307, 1316

LEWISHAM, Viscount, *Kent, W.*
Army—Voluntary Retirement of Officers, 1443

Licensing Laws Amendment Bill
(*Mr. Staveley Hill, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Isaac*)
c. Considered in Committee *Feb* 17, 877
Moved, "That the Chairman be directed to move the House, that leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Licensing Laws" (*Mr. Staveley Hill*); after short debate, Question put; A. 208, N. 7; M. 201 (D. L. 11)
Resolution reported; Bill ordered; read 1°* [Bill 76]

Limitation of Actions Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Chancellor*)
l. Presented; read 1ª *Feb* 23, 1164 (No. 17)

LINDSAY, Colonel R. J. Loyd (Financial Secretary for War), *Berkshire*
Army—Courts Martial, Returns of, 907
Seconded Officers, 516

Liverpool Corporation Water Bill (*by Order*)
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *Feb* 24, 1278
Amendt. to leave out "now," and add "upon this day six months" (*Mr. Rowley Hill*); Question proposed, "That 'now' &c.;" after dedate, Amendt. withdrawn

Liverpool Corporation Water Bill—cont.
Main Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2°
Moved, "That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee of nine Members, Five to be nominated by the House and Four by the Committee of Selection, and that such of the Petitioners as shall have presented their Petitions against the Bill may, if they think fit, be heard before such Committee by their Counsel" (*Mr. Sclater-Booth*); Motion agreed to
Ordered, That such of the Petitioners as shall have presented their Petitions against the Bill on or before the first day of March next may, if they think fit, be heard before such Committee by their Counsel, and Counsel may be heard in support of the Bill against such Petitions
That it be an Instruction to the Committee, that they have power to inquire into and report upon the present and prospective sufficiency of the water supply of the district which the Corporation of Liverpool are authorized to supply, and into the existence of any other available source of supply; and whether, having regard to the various interests affected by the scheme, and to the present and prospective requirements of the population in the Severn Valley as to water supply, fishing, navigation, and the scouring effect of floods, compulsory powers should be given to take water from the River Vyrnwy and its tributaries; and, if so, to what extent, and under what conditions, as to compensation water, or otherwise; and also what provisions are requisite for enforcing and securing such conditions" (*Mr. Sclater-Booth*)

LLOYD, Mr. S. S., *Plymouth*
Bankruptcy Law Amendment, 2R. 561
County Courts, 2R. 1405
Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. Amendt. 1500, 1613

Loans for Local Works
Question, Mr. Chamberlain; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 12, 516
Select Committee appointed, "to inquire into the system under which Loans for Local Works are now advanced out of the Consolidated Fund, or on the security of the Consolidated Fund; and to Report:—
1. Whether the system hitherto in force has been conducted without loss to the Exchequer, pointing out, if there has been loss, the causes which have led to it:
2. Whether it is clear that the present system, if continued, will be carried on without loss to the Exchequer or injury to the public credit:
3. Whether further facilities might not with advantage be given to local authorities so as to enable them to borrow, upon their own local security, without having recourse to the Exchequer; and whether any, and if so, what amendments are required in 'The Local Loans Act, 1875'" (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) *Feb* 23
And, on *Mar* 5, Committee nominated; List of the Committee, 1275

Local Courts of Bankruptcy (Ireland) Bill [H.L.] (*The Lord Chancellor*)
l. Presented; read 1ª * *Feb* 19 (No. 11)
Read 2ª * *Feb* 26

Local Government Areas (Commission) Bill
(*Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, Mr. Pell, Mr. Clare Read, Mr. Backhouse*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 14]

Local Inquiries (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. P. J. Smyth, Colonel King-Harman, Mr. Joseph Cowen, Sir Harcourt Johnstone, Dr. Cameron, Sir Joseph M'Kenna*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 33]

London, City of—Gratuities to Officers of the Corporation
Question, Mr. W. H. James; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross *Feb* 23, 1193

Lord Clerk Register (Scotland) Act, 1879 *—The Regulations*
Question, Mr. Fraser Mackintosh; Answer, The Lord Advocate *Feb* 27, 1568

LOTHIAN, Marquess of
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LOWTHER, Right Hon. J. (Chief Secretary for Ireland), *York City*
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  Parliament—Privilege—Mr. Plimsoll, 1149
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  Lord Clerk Register (Scotland) Act, 1879, 1568

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Marriage Laws Amendment Bill
(*Mr. Blennerhassett, Mr. Morley, Mr. Monk, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Cogan*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 23]

Married Women's Property Acts 1870 and 1874 Amendment Bill
(*Mr. Hibbert, Mr. Goldney, Mr. Osborne Morgan*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 18]

Married Women's Property (Scotland) Bill (*Mr. Anderson, Sir Robert Anstruther, Mr. Orr Ewing, Mr. M'Laren, Mr. Lyon Playfair*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 44]

MARTEN, Mr. A. G., *Cambridge*
  Leases, 2R. 886, 895
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  Question, The Marquess of Ripon; Answer, The Duke of Richmond and Gordon *Feb* 6, 144

Medical Act (1858) Amendment Bill
(*Dr. Lush, Sir Trevor Lawrence, Sir Joseph M'Kenna*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 110]
  Read 2° * *Feb* 11
  Referred to a Select Comm. *Feb* 19

Medical Act (1858) Amendment (No. 2) Bill (*Mr. Arthur Mills, Mr. Childers, Mr. Goldney*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 37]
  Read 2° *, and referred to a Select Comm. *Feb* 12

Medical Act (1858) Amendment (No. 3) Bill (*Lord George Hamilton, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 10 [Bill 67]
  Read 2° *, and referred to a Select Comm. *Feb* 12
  Committee nominated *Feb* 19

Medical Appointments Qualifications Bill
(*Mr. Errington, Mr. Blennerhassett*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 12 [Bill 71]
  Read 2° * *Feb* 17
  Referred to a Select Comm. *Feb* 19

MELDON, Mr. C. H., *Kildare*
  Borough Franchise (Ireland), Res. 811, 875
  Licensing Laws Amendment, Leave, 877
  Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 151, 189
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Mercantile Marine — Lights of Fishing Vessels at Sea
  Question, Sir Edward Watkin; Answer, Mr. J. G. Talbot *Feb* 6, 148; Question, Sir Edward Watkin; Answer, Viscount Sandon *Feb* 20, 1099

Merchant Shipping Acts (*Grain Cargoes*)
Observations, Mr. Plimsoll; Reply, Mr. Speaker; Question, Sir Wilfrid Lawson; Answer, Sir Charles Russell *Feb* 26, 1446

Merchant Shipping (Grain Cargoes) Bill
(*Mr. Plimsoll, Mr. Joseph Cowen, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Gorst*)
c. Considered in Committee; Resolution agreed to, and reported; Bill ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 27]

Merchant Shipping Acts—The "Louisa Fletcher" of Liverpool (*Unseaworthiness*)
Question, Mr. Burt; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross *Feb* 27, 1570

Merchant Ships Laden in Bulk
Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to make inquiry concerning the recent foundering of Ships laden with grain, coal, and other heavy or bulk cargoes; and to ascertain whether such founderings are due to excessive cargoes or to defective dimensions or construction, or to the employment of vessels unsuited for the trades or voyages in which the Ships are employed, or to any other and what cause; and to report whether any change in the Law affecting Merchant Shipping is required to prevent the recurrence of such losses" (*Viscount Sandon*) *Feb* 24, 1352; after debate, Question put, and agreed to
And, on *Mar* 5, Committee nominated; List of the Committee, 1382

Metropolis Improvement Schemes Modification Provisional Orders Bill
(*Sir Matthew Ridley, Mr. Secretary Cross*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 17 [Bill 77]

Metropolitan Police, The—Pay and Organization
Question, Mr. W. M. Torrens; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross *Feb* 19, 913

Middlesex Land Registry Bill
(*Mr. Osborne Morgan, Mr. Gregory, Sir Sydney Waterlow*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 25 [Bill 89]

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Milbank, Mr. F. A., *Yorkshire, N.R.*
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Mowbray, Right Hon. J. R., *Oxford University*
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Municipal Corporations (Property Qualification Abolition) Bill (*Mr. Mundella, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Burt, Mr. Sullivan*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 43]
Read 2°, after short debate *Feb* 18, 895

Municipal Corporations, Unreformed—Report of Royal Commission
Question, Sir Charles W. Dilke; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross *Feb* 12, 507; Question, Mr. Richard; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 23, 1190

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(*Major O'Gorman, Sir Joseph M'Kenna, Mr. Richard Power, Mr. Blennerhassett*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 28]

MUNTZ, Mr. P. H., *Birmingham*
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NAGHTEN, Colonel A. R., *Winchester*
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NEWDEGATE, Mr. C. N., *Warwickshire, N.*
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NORWOOD, Mr. C. M., *Kingston-upon-Hull*
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O'Brien, Sir P., *King's Co.*
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- Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 132, 307
- Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1628, 1687
- Relief of Distress (Ireland), 2R. 550, 551; Comm. *cl.* 3, 749; *cl.* 5, 994, 996; *cl.* 9, 1009, 1011, 1016, 1017
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O'Clery, Mr. K., *Wexford Co.*
- Borough Franchise (Ireland), Res. 844
- Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 132, 337
- Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1621, 1683
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O'Conor, Mr. D. M., *Sligo Co.*
- Army—Commissariat and Transport Departments, 681
- Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 412
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O'Donnell, Mr. F. H., *Dungarvan*
- India—Indigo Cultivation in Behar, 1444
- Ireland—Miscellaneous Questions
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- Relief of Distress (Ireland), Amendt. 477, 520
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- Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 174
- Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1623; Motion for Adjournment, 1652, 1684
- Relief of Distress (Ireland), 2R. 548; Comm. 717; *cl.* 3, 927, 931, 934, 961; *cl.* 9, Motion for reporting Progress, 1008; Consid. *add. cl.* 1229; *cl.* 4, 1234
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O'Gorman, Major P., *Waterford*
- Parliament — Privilege — Mr. Plimsoll, 809, 1151, 1156
  - Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 446
- Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1642, 1643
- Parliament—Orders of the Day—Standing Order of Supply and Ways and Means, Res. 1579
- Relief of Distress (Ireland), Leave, 243; Comm. *cl.* 9, 1018
- Seed Potatoes (Ireland), 2R. 451; Consid. 879

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- Parliament — Privilege — Mr. Plimsoll, 800, 1110, 1142, 1152
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O'Shaughnessy, Mr. R., *Limerick*
- Borough Franchise (Ireland), Res. 849
- Merchant Ships Laden in Bulk, Motion for a Select Committee, 1377
- Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 125, 127, 366, 432
- Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1615, 1641
- Relief of Distress (Ireland), Leave, 243; 2R. 538; Comm. 709, 710; *cl.* 3, 730, 748, 767; Amendt. 923, 925, 928, 931, 933, 935, 936, 937, 941, 942, 984, 985, 986; *cl.* 4, Amendt. 987, 988; *cl.* 15, 1161; *cl.* 17, 1162; *cl.* 20, Amendt. *ib.*, 1163; Consid. *cl.* 3, 1233
- Supply—Public Works in Ireland, Amendt. 1256, 1258

O'Sullivan, Mr. W. H., *Limerick Co.*
- Criminal Law (Ireland) — Assault on Lord Fermoy, 379
- Relief of Distress (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 3, 927, 930, 931; Amendt. 934, 935, 936, 938, 940, 946; *cl.* 5, 996
- Seed Potatoes (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 6, 654; Consid. *cl.* 6, 880, 883

Otway, Mr. A. J., *Rochester*
- Army, Flogging in the, 515

Outlawries Bill
- *c.* Read 1°* *Feb 5*

Paget, Mr. R. H., *Somersetshire, Mid*
Criminal Code, 2R. 1245
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 4, 988

Palmer, Mr. C. M., *Durham, N.*
Merchant Ships Laden in Bulk, Motion for a Select Committee, 1364
Parliament—Privilege—Mr. Plimsoll, 809
Wine Duties, Select Committee on—Report, 1440

Parliament

LORDS—

Meeting of the Parliament *Feb* 5

The Session of Parliament was opened by The Queen in Person

Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech delivered by The Lord Chancellor *Feb* 5, 2

Roll of the Lords—Garter King of Arms attending, delivered at the Table (in the usual manner) a List of the Lords Temporal in the Seventh Session of the Twenty-first Parliament of the United Kingdom *Feb* 5

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had prepared and laid it on the Table (*P.P.* No. 3) *Feb* 9

The Queen's Speech having been reported by The Lord Chancellor; An Address to Her Majesty thereon moved by The Earl of Onslow (the Motion being seconded by The Earl of Rosse) *Feb* 5, 6; after long debate, Address agreed to, *nemine dissentiente,* and ordered to be presented to Her Majesty by the Lords with White Staves

Her Majesty's Answer to the Address reported *Feb* 10, 375

Chairman of Committees—The Earl of Redesdale appointed, *Nemine Dissentiente,* to take the Chair in all Committees of this House for this Session *Feb* 5

Committee for Privileges—appointed *Feb* 5

Sub-Committee for the Journals—appointed *Feb* 5

Appeal Committee—appointed *Feb* 5

Office of the Clerk of the Parliaments and Office of the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod—Select Committee appointed; List of the Committee *Feb* 16, 675

Private Bills

All petitions relating to Standing Orders which shall be presented during the present Session referred to the Standing Orders Committee, unless otherwise ordered *Feb* 17

Opposed Private Bills—Committee appointed; List of the Committee *Feb* 16, 676

Parliamentary Reporting—The House of Lords, Question, Lord Sudeley; Answer, The Earl of Beaconsfield *Feb* 17, 777

COMMONS—

The Queen's Speech having been reported by Mr. Speaker; An humble Address thereon moved by Colonel Drummond-Moray (the Motion being seconded by Mr. J. P. Corry)

[*cont.*

Parliament—Commons—*cont.*

Feb 5, 62; after long debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Shaw*); after further debate, Question put; A. 62, N. 174; M. 112 (D. L. 1)

Moved, "That this House do now adjourn" (*Mr. Sheil*); after short debate, Motion withdrawn; Debate adjourned

Debate resumed *Feb* 6, 152

Amendt. at end of Question, to add "We also think it right to represent to Your Majesty that Your Majesty's Government, although in possession of timely warning and information, have not taken adequate steps to meet promptly and efficaciously the severe distress now existing and increasing in Ireland; and we are of opinion that, in order to avert the horrors of famine from a wide area in that Country, the most vigorous measures are immediately necessary; and we are further of opinion that it is essential to the peace and prosperity of Ireland to legislate at once and in a comprehensive manner on these questions; and we humbly assure Your Majesty that we shall regard it as the duty of Parliament, on the earliest opportunity, to consider the necessary measures for the purpose, more urgently the tenure of land, the neglect of which by Parliament has been the true cause of constantly recurring dissatisfaction and distress in Ireland" (*Mr. Redmond*); Question proposed, "That those words be there added;" after long debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Mitchell Henry*); Motion agreed to; Debate adjourned

Debate resumed *Feb* 9, 269; after long debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Gabbett*); after further short debate, Question put, and agreed to; Debate further adjourned

Debate resumed *Feb* 10, 387; after long debate, Question put; A. 66, N. 216; M. 150
Div. List, A. and N. 447

Main Question put, and agreed to

Committee appointed, to draw up the said Address; List of the Committee, 449

Report of Address brought up, and read a first and second time *Feb* 11, 453

Amendment (*Mr. O'Donnell*) *Feb* 11, 477; Debate adjourned

Further Proceeding on the said Report resumed *Feb* 12, 520

Amendt. at end of Address, to add "We humbly represent to Your Majesty that, while wasting the resources and straining the honour of the State in unjust aggressions abroad, the Ministry have endangered the peace and neglected the interests of the Country at home:

"That when the attention of Your Majesty's advisers was called during last Parliament to the approaching distress in Ireland, they only replied with insulting mockery, and that when the distress deepened, and the inhabitants of the afflicted districts sought to move public opinion by peaceable meetings, the Government adopted an attitude of provocation, and answered the Petitions of the starving cultivators by arbitrary arrests and displays of military force:

[*cont.*

PARLIAMENT—COMMONS—*cont.*

"That the Ministry seek to stir up evil passions and prejudices between the English and Irish peoples:

"That they sedulously describe as seditious and disloyal the Constitutional endeavours of the Irish representatives to establish improved relations between Ireland and the other portions of Your Majesty's Dominions and to bring about a better distribution of the legislative work which now overburthens the Imperial Parliament:

"That when any English Party or English politicians seek to promote the removal of Irish grievances, they are denounced by the present Ministry to the prejudices of the unthinking and unreflecting as the bad patriots and enemies of England, and that there can no longer be a doubt that this policy has been adopted for the purpose of obtaining a factious and calamitous success at the approaching General Elections:

"And that, therefore, in face of such misconduct, we have no alternative but to beseech Your Majesty to dismiss from Your Councils Your present advisers, in order to prevent the further practice of abuses more dangerous than open treason to the State" (*Mr. O'Donnell*); after short debate, Question put; A. 12, N. 128; M. 116 (D. L. No. 4)

Address agreed to; To be presented by Privy Councillors

Her Majesty's Answer to the Address reported *Feb* 18, 886

Privileges—Ordered, That a Committee of Privileges be appointed *Feb 5*

Standing Orders—Select Committee on Standing Orders nominated; List of the Committee *Feb* 6, 246

Selection—Committee of Selection nominated; List of the Committee *Feb* 6, 246

Public Petitions—Select Committee appointed; List of the Committee *Feb* 9, 373

Printing—Select Committee appointed; List of the Committee *Feb* 10, 452

Kitchen and Refreshment Rooms (House of Commons)—Standing Committee appointed; List of the Committee *Feb* 19, 1020

Order

Viscount Castlereagh, Question, Mr. Biggar; Answer, Mr. Speaker *Feb* 26, 1448

Business of the House

Postponement of Motions, Observations, The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir George Campbell *Feb* 10, 383;—Questions, Mr. Fawcett, Sir Wilfrid Lawson; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Speaker *Feb* 10, 385; Ordered, That Notices of Motion be postponed till after the Orders of the Day (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*);—*Supply*, Question, Mr. Dillwyn; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 13, 592;—Question, Mr. Biggar; Answer, Mr. Newdegate *Feb* 20, 1106; Orders of the Day postponed *Feb* 26, 1449

Private Bills

Standing Orders Committee appointed; List of the Committee *Feb* 16, 676

[*cont.*

PARLIAMENT—*cont.*

Provisional Order Bills

Ordered, That all Bills for confirming Provisional Orders or Certificates shall be set down for consideration, each day, in a separate List, after the Private Business, and arranged in the same order as that prescribed by the Standing Orders for Private Bills; and every such Bill, when or so far as it is unopposed, shall after the Second Reading stand referred to the Committee constituted by Standing Order for unopposed Private Bills, and shall be subject to the same Rules and Orders of the House, so far as they are applicable (*The Chairman of Ways and Means*) *Feb* 20, 1098

Meeting of the House—Resolved, That this House will meet To-morrow at Two of the clock (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) *Feb* 10

Indisposition of Mr. Speaker

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, on account of indisposition:—Whereupon Mr. Raikes, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker, and after Prayers counted the House, and, Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order *Feb* 16

Orders of the Day

Standing Order of Supply and Ways and Means, Moved, "That the Standing Order relative to Supply or Ways and Means standing the first Order of the Day on Friday be read, and suspended

"That the Committee of Supply be deferred until after the Order of the Day for resuming the Adjourned Debate on Business of the House (Order in Debate)" (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) *Feb* 27, 1572; after short debate, Motion agreed to

Qualification of Voters, Midlothian, Questions, Mr. Hardcastle; Answers, The Lord Advocate *Feb* 17, 792

Re-distribution of Seats—Corrupt Practices at Elections, Question, Mr. Milbank; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 19, 910

Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate)

Resolutions (Mr. Newdegate), Question, Mr. Newdegate; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 20, 1158

Notice of Resolutions, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 23, 1183

Moved, "That, whenever any Member shall have been named by the Speaker, or by the Chairman of a Committee of the whole House, as disregarding the authority of the Chair, or abusing the Rules of the House by persistently and wilfully obstructing the Business of the House, or otherwise, then, if the offence has been committed in the House, the Speaker shall forthwith put the question, on a Motion being made, no amendment, adjournment, or debate being allowed, 'That such Member be

[*cont.*

Parliament—Business of the House (*Order in Debate*)—cont.

suspended from the service of the House during the remainder of that day's sitting;' and, if the offence has been committed in a Committee of the whole House, the Chairman shall, on a Motion being made, put the same question in a similar way, and if the Motion is carried shall forthwith suspend the proceedings of the Committee and report the circumstance to the House; and the Speaker shall thereupon put the same question, without amendment, adjournment, or debate, as if the offence had been committed in the House itself. If any Member be suspended three times in one Session, under this Order, his suspension on the third occasion shall continue for one week, and until a Motion has been made, upon which it shall be decided, at one sitting, by the House, whether the suspension shall then cease, or for what longer period it shall continue; and, on the occasion of such Motion, the Member may, if he desires it, be heard in his place" (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) *Feb* 26, 1450

After debate, Amendt. to leave out from "That," and add "during a Debate, whether in the House or in Committee, any Member may draw the attention of the Chair to misconduct on the part of a Member who in addressing the House may persistently endeavour to prevent the progress of Business, by rising in his place and taking Notice that the Member for is wilfully obstructing the Business of this House

"Whereupon (unless in the judgment of the Chair the interruption is frivolous and unfounded, in which case he shall call on the Member in possession of the House to proceed), Mr. Speaker (or the Chairman) shall forthwith put the Question 'That be not further heard,' which Question shall be decided without amendment or debate, but the Motion shall not be carried by a majority of less than two-thirds if a Division is called

"Any Member so put to silence shall stand suspended from the service of the House for one week

"Any Member put to silence twice in the same Session shall stand suspended from the service of the House for one calendar month, and for such further period until he shall have submitted himself to the House and given assurance that he will not so offend again" (*Mr. Sampson Lloyd*) *v.*, 1500; Question proposed, "That 'whenever,' &c.;" after further debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Shaw*); Question put, and agreed to; Debate adjourned

Debate resumed *Feb* 27, 1580; after long debate, Amendt. withdrawn

Amendt. in line 1, after "whenever," to insert "before one o'clock a.m." (*Mr. Biggar*), 1638; Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted;" after short debate, Question put; A. 14, N. 290; M. 276 (D. L. 23)

Amendt. in line 1, after "Member," to insert "at least one hundred Members being present" (*Mr. O'Donnell*), 1640; Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted;" after debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*The O'Donoghue*); after further debate, Question put, and agreed to; Debate adjourned

Moved, "That Mr. Speaker do take the Chair To-morrow, at Twelve of the clock" (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*)

Amendt. to leave out "Twelve," and insert "Two" (*Mr. Callan*); Question proposed, "That 'Twelve,' &c.;" Question put; A. 87, N. 15; M. 72 (D. L. 24)

Main Question put, and agreed to

Debate resumed *Feb* 28, 1669; Question put; A. 8, N. 68; M. 60 (D. L. 25)

Amendt. in lines 2 and 3, to leave out "or by the Chairman of a Committee of the whole House" (*Mr. Callan*); Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after debate, Question put; A. 191, N. 17; M. 174 (D. L. 26)

Amendt. in line 4, to leave out "or otherwise" (*Mr. Finigan*), 1688; Question proposed, "That 'or otherwise,' &c.;" after short debate, Question put, and agreed to

Amendt. in line 4, after "then," to insert "the Member so named shall be permitted to offer such explanation, defence, or apology as he may see fit for a time not exceeding ten minutes, after which" (*Sir George Campbell*), 1691; Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted;" after short debate, Question put; A. 25, N. 195; M. 170 (D. L. 27)

Amendt. in line 8, after "House," to insert "other and except that of voting" (*Mr. Courtney*), 1693; Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted;" after short debate, Question put; A. 42, N. 172; M. 130

Div. List, A. and N. 1694

Amendt. in line 12, after "House," to insert "when the Member so named shall be permitted to offer such explanation, defence, or apology as he may see fit for a time not exceeding ten minutes, after which" (*Mr. Callan*), 1696; Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and negatived

Amendt. in line 15, to leave out "three times," and insert "twice" (*The Marquess of Hartington*), 1696; Question proposed, "That 'three times,' &c.;" after short debate, Amendt. withdrawn

Amendt. in line 16, after "made," to insert "at the commencement of Public Business" (*Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice*), 1702; Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted;" Amendt. withdrawn

Amendt. at end of Question, to add "Provided always, That nothing in this Resolution shall be taken to deprive the House of the power of proceeding against any Member according to ancient usages" (*Mr. William Edward Forster*), 1702; Question proposed, "That those words be there added;" Question put, and agreed to

Main Question, as amended, put; after short debate, Main Question, as amended, agreed to

[*cont.*

Parliament — Business of the House (Order in Debate)—cont.

Resolved, That, whenever any Member shall have been named by the Speaker, or by the Chairman of a Committee of the whole House, as disregarding the authority of the Chair, or abusing the Rules of the House by persistently and wilfully obstructing the Business of the House, or otherwise, then, if the offence has been committed in the House, the Speaker shall forthwith put the question, on a Motion being made, no amendment, adjournment, or debate being allowed, 'That such Member be suspended from the service of the House during the remainder of that day's sitting;' and, if the offence has been committed in a Committee of the whole House, the Chairman shall, on a Motion being made, put the same question in a similar way, and if the Motion is carried shall forthwith suspend the proceedings of the Committee and report the circumstance to the House; and the Speaker shall thereupon put the same question, without amendment, adjournment, or debate, as if the offence had been committed in the House itself. If any Member be suspended three times in one Session, under this Order, his suspension on the third occasion shall continue for one week, and until a Motion has been made, upon which it shall be decided, at one sitting, by the House, whether the suspension shall then cease, or for what longer period it shall continue; and, on the occasion of such Motion, the Member may, if he desires it, be heard in his place: Provided always, That nothing in this Resolution shall be taken to deprive the House of the power of proceeding against any Member according to ancient usages

Moved, "That the said Resolution be a Standing Order of this House" (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*), 1706

Amendt. to leave out from "That," and add "in the last Session of a Parliament, it is inexpedient to constitute an untried experiment by which the proceedings of Parliament may be materially altered, and the privileges of Members lessened, as a Standing Order of the House" (*Mr. Dillwyn*) *v.*; Question proposed, "That the words &c.;" after short debate, Question put; A. 166, N. 20; M. 146 (D. L. 29)

Main Question put, and agreed to

Parliament—Duration of Parliament

Moved, "That, in the opinion of this House, the duration of any future Parliament should not exceed five years" (*Mr. John Holms*) *Feb* 24, 1316

Amendt. to leave out from "House," and add "the Septennial Act has been satisfactory in its operation, and ought not to be repealed" (*Colonel Alexander*) *v.*; Question proposed, "That the words &c.;" after short debate, Question put; A. 60, N. 110; M. 50 (D. L. 22)

Words added; main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to

Parliament, Privilege of—Immunity from Arrest

Moved, "That the privilege of Immunity from Arrest, now enjoyed by Peers and Members of Parliament, is not for the public good, and ought to be abolished" (*Mr. Blake*) *Feb* 24, 1300

Amendt. to leave out from "That," and add "in the opinion of this House, it is not advisable to extend the liability of any class of Her Majesty's subjects to arrest or imprisonment for debt, but that it is advisable for the honour and dignity of this House that provision should be made for the immediate vacation of his seat by any Member who may become bankrupt or otherwise arrange or compound with his creditors under the Bankruptcy Laws" (*Mr. Charles Lewis*) *v.*; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after short debate, Question put; A. 111, N. 128; M. 17 (D. L. 21)

Question, "That those words be there added," put, and negatived

Parliament — Privilege — Interference of Peers in Elections — Hon. Major Jocelyn

Moved, "That the language of Major Jocelyn complained of to this House is a Breach of Privilege, and that the conduct of the Earl Cadogan as complained of to the House is also a Breach of the Privileges of this House" (*Mr. Sullivan*) *Feb* 23, 1198; Previous Question proposed, "That that Question be now put" (*Sir William Harcourt*); after short debate, Previous Question put; A. 15, N. 229; M. 214 (D. L. 18)

Parliament — Privilege — London Newspapers

Moved, "That the article entitled 'Our Brilliant Brethren' in the 'World' of the 18th instant, and the articles in the 'Morning Advertiser' of the 6th, 13th, 20th, and 21st instant, the 'Daily Telegraph' of the 9th, 12th, 13th, and 23rd instant, and the 'Pall Mall Gazette' of the 21st instant, read to this House, contain breaches of the Privileges of this House" (*Mr. O'Donnell*) *Feb* 23, 1214

Amendt. to leave out from "That," and add "this House do now proceed to the Orders of the Day" (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*); Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after short debate, Question put, and negatived

Words added; Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to

Parliament—Privilege—Mr. Plimsoll

Question, Observations, Sir Charles Russell; Reply, Mr. Plimsoll *Feb* 17, 797

Moved "That the publication of printed placards throughout the City of Westminster, representing the part taken by Sir Charles Russell, the Member for the said City, in the proceedings of this House as 'inhuman' and 'degrading,' injuriously reflects upon the said Member, is an attempt to coerce and

[*cont.*

Parliament—Privilege—Mr. Plimsoll—cont.
intimidate him in the discharge of his duties, and a breach of the Privileges of this House" (*Sir Charles Russell*); after short debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*The Marquess of Hartington*); after further short debate, Question put, and agreed to; Debate adjourned.
Debate resumed *Feb* 20, 1108; after short debate, Motion withdrawn
Moved, "That, in the opinion of this House, the conduct of the honourable Member for Derby in publishing printed placards denouncing the part taken by two honourable Members of this House in the proceedings of the House was calculated to interfere with the due discharge of the duties of a Member of this House, and is a breach of its Privileges:—But this House, having regard to the withdrawal by the honourable Member for Derby of the expressions to which the honourable Member for Westminster has drawn its attention, is of opinion that no further action on its part is necessary" (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*); after short debate, Previous Question proposed, "That that Question be now put" (*Sir William Harcourt*); after further debate, Previous Question put; A. 189, N. 127; M. 62 (D. L. 16)
Main Question put; A. 182, N. 116; M. 66 (D. L. 17)

PARLIAMENT—HOUSE OF LORDS
Sat First
1880
Feb 5—The Duke of Portland, after the death of his cousin
The Viscount St. Vincent, after the death of his father
The Lord Chelmsford, after the death of his father
The Lord Lawrence, after the death of his father
Feb 6—The Earl of Ashburnham, after the death of his father
The Lord Skene (Earl of Fife), after the death of his father
Feb 12—The Earl of Durham, after the death of his father
Feb 23—The Lord Clanwilliam (Earl of Clanwilliam), after the death of his father
Feb 27—The Lord Ponsonby, after the death of his brother

PARLIAMENT—HOUSE OF COMMONS
New Writs Issued
During Recess
For Elgin and Nairn Counties, *v.* Hon. Alexander William Duff, commonly called Viscount Macduff, now Earl of Fife, called up to the House of Peers
For Sheffield Borough, *v.* Right Hon. John Arthur Roebuck, deceased
For Liverpool Borough, *v.* John Torr, esquire, deceased
For Donegal County, *v.* William Wilson, esquire, deceased
[*cont.*

PARLIAMENT — COMMONS — *New Writs Issued* — cont.
1880
Feb 5—*For* Barnstaple Borough, *v.* Samuel Danks Waddy, esquire, Chiltern Hundreds
For Southwark Borough, *v.* John Locke, esquire, deceased
Feb 20—*For* Kilkenny Borough, *v.* Benjamin Whitworth, esquire, Manor of Northstead
For Drogheda, *v.* William Hogarty O'Leary, esquire, deceased
Feb 27—*For* Norfolk (Western Division), *v.* Sir William Bagge, deceased

New Members Sworn
1880
Feb 5—Sir George Macpherson Grant, baronet, *Elgin and Nairn Counties*
Thomas Lea, esquire, *Donegal County*
Feb 10—Edward Whitley, esquire, *Liverpool Borough*
Feb 13—Samuel Danks Waddy, esquire, *Sheffield*
Viscount Lymington, *Barnstaple*
Feb 16—Edward George Clarke, esquire, *Southwark*

Parliamentary and Municipal Registration Act, 1878 (41 & 42 *Vict. c.* 26, *s.* 5)
Question, Mr. Chamberlain; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross *Feb* 26, 1440

Parliamentary Franchise Bill
(*Mr. Elliot, Mr. Hunter Rodwell, Mr. Serjeant Spinks*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 19 [Bill 82]

Parochial Charities—City of London—Report of Royal Commission
Question, Mr. W. H. James; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross *Feb* 12, 508

Partnerships Bill
(*Mr. Sampson Lloyd, Mr. Herschell, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Whitwell*)
c. Considered in Committee; Resolution agreed to, and reported; Bill ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 26]

Patents for Inventions Bill
(*Mr. Anderson, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Dalrymple, Mr. Alexander Brown*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 25 [Bill 92]

PEASE, Mr. J. W., *Durham, S.*
Ancient Monuments, Comm. *cl.* 2, 775, 776
Criminal Law — Channel Islands — Case of James Thomas, 684
Execution at Manchester, 1187
Custom House Re-organization, 911
Turkey—Anglo-Turkish Convention (Appointment of Officers)—Keamil Pasha, 917

Pell, Mr. A., *Leicestershire, S.*
Railways and Canals—Through Rates, 1185
Rivers Conservancy, 591

Pemberton, Mr. E. L., *Kent, E.*
Charity Commission—Sittings of the Board, 1439

Penal Clauses Abolition Bill
(*Mr. P. J. Smyth, Dr. O'Leary, Mr. Synan*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 9 [Bill 59]

Percy, Right Hon. Earl, *Northumberland, N.*
Ancient Monuments, 3R. 1383
Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1664

Perpetuity Leases (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. Errington, Colonel Colthurst, Mr. Fay*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 58]

Persia and Herat
Questions, Earl Granville; Answers, The Earl of Beaconsfield *Feb* 10, 375; Explanation of Statement, The Earl of Beaconsfield *Feb* 12, 485; Observations, Question, Earl Granville; Reply, The Earl of Beaconsfield *Feb* 13, 582; Question, The Marquess of Hartington; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 10, 382; Question, Mr. W. Holms; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 12, 520

Pim, Captain B., *Gravesend*
Commerce and Free Trade, Motion for a Select Committee, 616
Navy—Admiralty Financial Return, 265
H.M.S. "Wivern," 1196
Navy Estimates, 1105
Parliament—Orders of the Day—Standing Order of Supply and Ways and Means, Res. 1579

Playfair, Right Hon. Mr. Lyon, *Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities*
Liverpool Corporation Water, 2R. 1292
Medical Staff (India), 1435
Registrar General, Appointment of—Dr. Farr, 1193

Plimsoll, Mr. S., *Derby Bo.*
Merchant Shipping—Grain Cargoes, 1446, 1447
Merchant Ships Laden in Bulk, Motion for a Select Committee, 1359
Parliament—Privilege—Mr. Plimsoll, 797, 1109

Plunket, Hon. D. R., *Dublin University*
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 209, 217, 221, 223, 231
Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1600

Political Prisoners Bill
(*Mr. O'Connor Power, Sir Charles W. Dilke, Mr. Joseph Cowen, Sir Wilfrid Lawson*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 19]

Poor Law
Dissolution of the Witham Union, Question, Mr. Round; Answer, Mr. Sclater-Booth *Feb* 27, 1566
Poor Removal—Legislation, Question, Mr. Synan; Answer, Mr. Sclater-Booth *Feb* 12, 514

Poor Law Guardians (Election by Ballot) (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. Errington, Mr. Gray, Mr. O'Conor*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 20]

Poor Law Guardians (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. Fay, Mr. P. J. Smyth, Mr. Patrick Martin, Mr. Errington, Mr. Redmond*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 21]

Poor Law Guardians (Ireland) (Ministers of Religion) Bill (*Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, Mr. Shaw, Mr. Denis O'Conor*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 13 [Bill 75]

Post Office
Miscellaneous Questions
Emyvale, Question, Mr. Sullivan; Answer, Lord John Manners *Feb* 19, 918
Investments—Savings Banks, Question, Mr. Fawcett; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 16, 682
Mails for Gibraltar, Question, Colonel Naghten; Answer, Lord John Manners *Feb* 19, 922
Private Telegraph Wires, Questions, Mr. Gray; Answers, Lord John Manners *Feb* 23, 1191;—*Disclosure of Private Telegrams*, Questions, Lord Randolph Churchill, Major Nolan; Answers, Lord John Manners *Feb* 26, 1436
Post Office Savings Banks, Question, Mr. Wait; Answer, Lord John Manners *Feb* 17, 811
Post Office Savings Bank Regulations, Question, Mr. Hibbert; Answer, Lord John Manners *Feb* 24, 1297
The New Penny Postage Stamp, Questions, Mr. Thomson Hankey; Answers, Lord John Manners *Feb* 16, 682

Post Office (Money Orders) Bill
(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Lord John Manners*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 9 [Bill 62]

Potato Crop
Select Committee appointed, "to inquire into the best means of diminishing the frequency and extent of failures in the Potato Crop" (*Major Nolan*) *Feb* 10

POWER, Mr. J. O'Connor, *Mayo*
Parliament—Privilege—Mr. Plimsoll, 1146
Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 82, 130, 201, 365, 369
Parliament—Privilege—Interference of Peers in Elections—Hon. Major Jocelyn, Res. 1210, 1212
Prisons (Ireland)—Abolition of Spike Island Convict Prison, 685
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Comm. 692 ; *cl.* 3, 736, 741, 742, 753, 927 ; *cl.* 9, 1019

POWER, Mr. R., *Waterford*
Parliament—Orders of the Day—Standing Order of Supply and Ways and Means, Res. 1575, 1579
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 9, 1018

PRICE, Captain G. E., *Devonport*
Navy—Royal Marines, 915

Prisons (Ireland) Act—Infirmary and Gaol Surgeons
Question, Mr. Errington ; Answer, Mr. J. Lowther *Feb* 23, 1192

Public Health (Ireland) Act (1878) Amendment Bill
(*Mr. Redmond, Mr. O'Clery, Mr. Fay*)
c. Ordered ; read 1º* *Feb* 6 [Bill 16]

Public Health—Trichinosis—School Ship "Cornwall"
Question, Observations, Lord Thurlow ; Reply, Earl Beauchamp *Feb* 19, 903

PULESTON, Mr. J. H., *Devonport*
Africa—West Coast—Medina and Liberia, 1444
India—Wynaad Gold Fields, 1568
India Office—Shipping Contracts, 1443

RAIKES, Mr. H. C. (Chairman of Committees of Ways and Means), *Chester*
Chester Gas Bill, 1565
Licensing Laws Amendment, Leave, 877
Liverpool Corporation Water, 2R. 1293
Provisional Order Bills, Res. 1098
Railway Servants Compensation for Injury, 1446
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 3, 731 ; *cl.* 9, 1002, 1008, 1012, 1015, 1017 ; *cl.* 15, 1161
Seed Potatoes (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 3, 652 ; *cl.* 6, 657, 658, 659, 773

Railway Brakes
Question, Earl De La Warr ; Answer, Lord Henniker *Feb* 19, 901

Railway Charges Abroad
Moved, that there be laid before the House, "a Return of the rate of charges authorized by law, and those actually levied by the different railway companies, in the following countries : France, United States of America, Russia, Italy, Germany, Austria, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Portugal" (*The Earl of Cork and Orrery*) *Feb* 12, 506 ; after short debate, Motion withdrawn

Railway Servants Compensation for Injury
Questions, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Sullivan ; Answers, Mr. Raikes, Mr. Speaker *Feb* 26, 1445

Railways and Canals—Through Rates
Question, Mr. Arthur Peel ; Answer, Viscount Sandon *Feb* 23, 1185

RAMSAY, Mr. J., *Falkirk, &c.*
Chartered Banks (Colonial), 2R. Amendt. 567, 577
Supply—Local Government Board, 1271, 1273

RATHBONE, Mr. W., *Liverpool*
Chartered Banks (Colonial), 2R. 574

Rating of Towns (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. O'Shaughnessy, Sir Joseph M'Kenna*)
c. Ordered ; read 1º* *Feb* 6 [Bill 15]

READ, Mr. Clare S., *Norfolk, S.*
Municipal Corporations (Property Qualification Abolition), 2R. 898

REDESDALE, Earl of (Chairman of Committees)
Companies Acts Amendment, 2R. 1276

REDMOND, Mr. W. A., *Wexford*
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 132 ; Amendt. 152
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Comm. 714

Registrar General, Appointment of the—Dr. Farr
Question, Mr. Anderson ; Answer, Mr. Sclater-Booth *Feb* 6, 148 ; Observations, Question, The Marquess ot Lothian ; Reply, The Earl of Beaconsfield *Feb* 13, 585 ; Question, Mr. Lyon Playfair ; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 23, 1193

Registration of Voters (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. Meldon, Mr. Shaw, Mr. Henry*)
c. Ordered ; read 1º* *Feb* 6 [Bill 54]

Regulation of Railways Act, 1871
Question, General Sir George Balfour ; Answer, Viscount Sandon *Feb* 20, 1101 ;—*The Railway Commissioners*, Question, Mr. Monk ; Answer, Mr. J. G. Talbot *Feb* 17, 794

Relief of Distress (Ireland)
Question, Observations, Lord Emly; Reply, The Duke of Richmond and Gordon; short debate thereon *Feb* 12, 487; Question, Mr. Dillwyn; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 13, 589; Question, The O'Donoghue; Answer, Mr. J. Lowther, 591; Question, Observations, The Earl of Donoughmore, Lord Oranmore and Browne; Reply, The Duke of Richmond and Gordon *Feb* 19, 904; Questions, Mr. Mitchell Henry, Mr. Gray; Answers, Mr. J. Lowther *Feb* 23, 1194
Kilkenny Union, Questions, Mr. P. Martin; Answers, Mr. J. Lowther *Feb* 19, 920
Longford Union, The, Questions, Mr. Justin M'Carthy; Answers, Mr. J. Lowther *Feb* 6, 150; *Feb* 12, 519
Nenagh, Questions, Mr. O'Donnell; Answers, Mr. J. Lowther *Feb* 27, 1569
Newcastle West and Londonderry, Questions, Mr. O'Donnell; Answers, Mr. J. Lowther *Feb* 19, 916
Presentment Sessions—Loans for Sanitary Works, Questions, Colonel Colthurst, Mr. Shaw; Answers, Mr. J. Lowther *Feb* 12, 515
The Papers, Question, The O'Donoghue; Answer, Mr. J. Lowther *Feb* 6, 151

Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. James Lowther, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland*)
c. Motion for Leave (*The Chancellor of the Exchequer*) *Feb* 6, 238; after short debate, Motion agreed to; Bill ordered; read 1º* [Bill 1]
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2º" *Feb* 12, 533
Amendt. to leave out from "That," and add "it is inexpedient that any portion of the property accruing to the Commissioners of Church Temporalities under 'The Irish Church Act, 1869,' shall be applied towards the temporary relief of distress in Ireland, and that the provisions of the Bill authorizing such advances out of such property cannot be satisfactory; and this House is of opinion that all advances to be made for the purpose of relieving distress in Ireland shall be made from Imperial resources" (*Mr. Synan*) *v.*; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after debate, Amendt. withdrawn
Main Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2º
Order for Committee read; Moved, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair" *Feb* 16, 688
Amendt. to leave out from "That," and add "it is inexpedient that any portion of the property accruing to the Commissioners of Church Temporalities under "The Irish Church Act, 1869,' shall be applied towards the temporary relief of distress in Ireland, and that the provisions of the Bill authorizing such advances out of such property cannot be satisfactory; and this House is of opinion that all advances to be made for the purpose of relieving the distress in Ireland should be made from Imperial resources" (*Mr. Synan*)
[*cont.*

Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill—cont.
v.; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after long debate, Question put; A. 126, N. 34; M. 92 (D. L. 6)
Main Question, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker, &c.," put, and agreed to; Committee—R.P.
Committee—R.P. *Feb* 19, 923
Committee; Report *Feb* 20, 1159
Considered; after short debate, Bill read 3º *Feb* 23, 1226 [Bill 84]
l. Read 1ª* (*The Lord President*) *Feb* 24 (No. 19)

RICHARD, Mr. H., *Merthyr Tydvil*
Africa (West Coast)—Bombardment of Onitsha, 509, 510, 681
Municipal Corporations, 1180

RICHMOND AND GORDON, Duke of (Lord President of the Council)
Ireland, Distress in, 502, 503
Relief of Distress, 905
Ireland, State of, Motion for Returns, 1561, 1563
Medical Act (1858) Amendment, 144
Seeds (Ireland), Comm. 1183; 3R. 1429

RIDLEY, Sir M. W. (Under Secretary of State for the Home Department), *Northumberland, N.*
Commons Act (1876) Amendment, 2R. 900

RIDLEY, Mr. E., *Northumberland, S.*
Leases, 2R. 893

RIPON, Marquess of
India—Afghanistan—Policy of the Government, Address for Papers, 1076
Medical Act (1858) Amendment, 144

RITCHIE, Mr. C. T., *Tower Hamlets*
Beer Dealers' Retail Licences, Comm. 1709

Rivers Conservancy Bill—Legislation
Question, Mr. Arthur Peel; Answer, Mr. Sclater-Booth *Feb* 13, 591

ROBERTS, Mr. J., *Flint, &c.*
Leases, 2R. 893

ROSSE, Earl of
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 16

Roumania—The Jews
Question, Mr. Serjeant Simon; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 17, 794

ROUND, Mr. J., *Essex, E.*
Poor Law—Dissolution of the Witham Union, 1566

RUSSELL, Sir C., *Westminster*
Merchant Shipping—Grain Cargoes, 1448
Parliament—Privilege—Mr. Plimsoll, 797, 1110

Russia
The Explosion at the Winter Palace, Question, Observations, Earl Granville; Reply, The Earl of Beaconsfield *Feb* 19, 901; Question, The Marquess of Hartington; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 19, 922

Russia and Western Asia—Lieutenant Colonel Macgregor
Questions, Mr. Grant Duff; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. E. Stanhope *Feb* 19, 908

RYLANDS, Mr. P., *Burnley*
Beer Dealers' Retail Licences, Comm. 1709
Chartered Banks (Colonial), 2R. 574
Congress of Berlin—Protocol 18—Ottoman Bondholders, 1189
Parliament—Privilege—Mr. Plimsoll, Motion for Adjournment, 1157, 1158
Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 427
Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1595
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Comm. 697
Supply—Charity Commission for England and Wales, 1269
New Courts of Justice and Offices, 1253
Public Works in Ireland, 1260, 1261
Treasury, 1262, 1264, 1266
Turkey—Hafiz Pasha, 680, 913

Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1875—*Condemned Tea*
Question, Mr. Anderson; Answer, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson *Feb* 19, 920

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill (*Mr. Stevenson, Mr. Birley, Mr. Charles Wilson, Mr. Osborne Morgan, Mr. William M'Arthur, Mr. James*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 53]

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (No. 2) Bill
(*Mr. Pease, Viscount Castlereagh, Mr. Tremayne*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 17 [Bill 79]

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Wales) Bill (*Mr. Roberts, Mr. Richard, Mr. Hussey Vivian, Mr. Holland, Mr. Osborne Morgan*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 32]

Salmon Fisheries—The Solway Fisheries
Question, Mr. E. S. Howard; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross *Feb* 24, 1297

SALT, Mr. T., *Stafford*
Municipal Corporations (Property Qualification Abolition), 2R. 898

SAMUDA, Mr. J. D'A., *Tower Hamlets*
Merchant Ships Laden in Bulk, Motion for a Select Committee, 1366

SAMUELSON, Mr. H. B., *Frome*
Cyprus—Turkish Newspapers, 1300
Greece—Capture of Colonel Synge by Brigands, 1198, 1299, 1300
Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1646, 1686, 1691
Parliament — Duration of Parliament, Res. 1345
Supply—Foreign Office, 1266
Turkey—Murder of Mr. Ogle, 381, 382, 1104, 1197

SANDON, Right Hon. Viscount (President of the Board of Trade), *Liverpool*
Lighthouses, Ireland (West Coast), 1435
Mercantile Marine—Fishing Vessels, Lights of, at Sea, 1099
Merchant Ships Laden in Bulk, Motion for a Select Committee, 1352, 1380, 1381
Railways and Canals—Through Rates, 1185
Regulation of Railways Act, 1871, 1101
Sea Fisheries Commission—Trawl or Beam Fishing, 1295

School Board Elections — Elections of Guardians of the Poor
Moved, that there be laid before the House, Return of the number of electors on the lists and the number of them who polled in each of the School Board elections contested in 1879 in England and Wales, and of the cost to the ratepayers of each such election: And
Similar Return with respect to the contested elections of guardians in 1879 in England and Wales (*The Earl Fortescue*) *Feb* 10, 378; Motion agreed to

SCLATER-BOOTH, Right Hon. G. (President of the Local Government Board), *Hampshire, N.*
Liverpool Corporation Water, 2R. 1288, 1294
Poor Law—Dissolution of the Witham Union, 1566
Poor Removal, 514
Registrar General, Appointment of—Dr. Farr, 148
Rivers Conservancy, 591
Water Supply (England and Wales), 1185
Water Supply of London, 519

Scotland—Poor Law—Legislation
Question, Sir Alexander Gordon; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross *Feb* 17, 810

Sea Fisheries Commission—Trawl or Beam Fishing
Question, Lord Elcho; Answer, Viscount Sandon *Feb* 24, 1295

Sea Fisheries (Ireland) Bill
(*Dr. Ward, Mr. Collins, Sir Joseph M'Kenna, Mr. Redmond*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 36]

Seed (Ireland) [Advances]
c. Resolution considered in Committee *Feb* 13
Resolution reported *Feb* 16

Seed Potatoes (Ireland) Bill—*Afterwards* **Seeds (Ireland) Bill**
(*Major Nolan, Mr. George Browne, Mr. P. J. Smyth*)
c. Ordered ; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 48]
Read 2°, after short debate *Feb* 10, 449
Committee * ; Report *Feb* 11
Order for Committee (*on re-comm.*) read *Feb* 13, 651
Instruction to the Committee, That they have power to extend the provisions of the Bill to kinds of seed other than Potato seed
Committee—R.P.
Committee ; Report *Feb* 16, 772
Considered *Feb* 17, 878 ; after short debate, Bill read 3° ; Title amended ; Bill passed, with an amended Title
l. Read 1ª * (*Lord President*) *Feb* 19 (No. 10)
Read 2ª * *Feb* 20
Committee *Feb* 23, 1182
Report * *Feb* 24
Read 3ª, after short debate *Feb* 26, 1427 (No. 18)

Selborne, Lord
Companies Acts Amendment, 2R. 1277
Settled Land—Conveyancing and Law of Property—Solicitors Remuneration—Limitation of Actions, 1R. 1179
Tripartite Treaty of 1856, 783

Select Vestries
l. Bill, *pro formâ*, read 1ª *Feb* 5

Selwin-Ibbetson, Sir H. J. (Secretary to the Treasury), *Essex, W.*
Ancient Monuments, Comm. *cl.* 2, 774 ; Motion for reporting Progress, 775, 776 ; Consid. *cl.* 2, Amendt. 1274
Board of Works (Ireland) — Clare Castle Harbour and Pier, 918
Consolidation Acts, 518
Charity Expenses and Accounts, 508
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Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 141
Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1875—Condemned Tea, 920
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Civil Service Commission, 1271
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New Courts of Justice and Offices, 1252
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Royal Palaces, 1249
Shannon Navigation, 1261
Treasury, 1263, 1264, 1266
War Office Regulation Act, 1878, 1099

Settled Land Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Chancellor*)
l. Presented ; read 1ª *Feb* 23, 1164 (No. 14)

Shaw, Mr. W., *Cork Co.*
Borough Franchise (Ireland), Res. 873
Ireland — Distress — Presentment Sessions — Loans for Sanitary Works, 515
Parliament—Miscellaneous Questions
Orders of the Day, 1449, 1450
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Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. Motion for Adjournment, 1539, 1541, 1580, 1584, 1642, 1666, 1677
Parliament — Orders of the Day — Standing Order of Supply and Ways and Means, Res. 1579
Parliament—Privilege — London Newspapers, Res. 1225
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Leave, 240 ; 2R. 559 ; Comm. *cl.* 3, 728, 737, 753, 758, 759, 762, 770 ; Amendt. 771, 931, 932, 940, 942, 943, 946, 976 ; *cl.* 4, 989 ; Amendt. *ib.*, 991, 992 ; *cl.* 5, Amendt, *ib.*, 997 ; *cl.* 9, 1002, 1006, 1009 ; *cl.* 15, 1161 ; *cl.* 20, 1163 ; *add. cl.* 1227 ; Consid. 1231 ; *cl.* 4, Amendt. 1233, 1234 ; *cl.* 15, Amendt. 1235, 1236
Seed Potatoes (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 2, 651 ; *cl.* 6, 655 ; Consid. *cl.* 6, Amendt. 880, 883, 884
Supply—Public Works in Ireland, 1257

Sheil, Mr. E., *Athlone*
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, Motion for Adjournment, 142, 406

Simon, Mr. Serjeant J., *Dewsbury*
Morocco—Outbreak at Fez, 796
Roumania—The Jews, 794, 795, 1186

Sinclair, Sir J. G. T., *Caithness-shire*
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 313, 319

Slave Trade (Consolidation) Act—Disposal of Slaves
Question, Mr. Anderson ; Answer, Mr. W. H. Smith *Feb* 17, 791

Sligo Borough (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. O'Conor, Mr. Ashley, Mr. Errington*)
c. Ordered ; read 1° * *Feb* 5 [Bill 12]

Smith, Right Hon. W. H. (First Lord of the Admiralty), *Westminster*
Africa, East Coast of—Zanzibar—Slavery, 589
Navy—Miscellaneous Questions
Admiralty Financial Return, 265
Colonial Allowance to Navy and Royal Marine Officers, 268
H.M.S. "Wivern," 1196
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Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 299, 302

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Relief of Distress (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 3, 932
Seed Potatoes (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 6, 657; Consid. 879
Slave Trade (Consolidation) Act—Disposal of Slaves, 791

SOLICITOR GENERAL, The (Sir H. S. Giffard), *Launceston*
County Courts, 2R. 1408
Leases, 2R. 895
Parliament—Privilege—Mr. Plimsoll, 1131

Solicitors Remuneration Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Chancellor*)
l. Presented; read 1ª *Feb* 23, 1164 (No. 16)

South Kensington, Museum of Natural History
Question, Mr. J. Holms; Answer, Mr. Gerard Noel *Feb* 17, 791

South Western (of London) District Post Office Bill (*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Lord John Manners*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 25 [Bill 90]

SPEAKER, The (Right Hon. H. B. W. BRAND), *Cambridgeshire*
Borough Franchise (Ireland), Res. 835
Evictions (Ireland), 384
Merchant Shipping—Grain Cargoes, 1447
Parliament—Miscellaneous Questions
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Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1489, 1540, 1584, 1628, 1638, 1639, 1668, 1671, 1672, 1673, 1679, 1680, 1683, 1686, 1687, 1696, 1697, 1702
Parliament — Orders of the Day — Standing Order of Supply and Ways and Means, Res. 1578
Parliament — Privilege—London Newspapers, Res. 1221
Parliament—Privilege of Parliament—Immunity from Arrest, Res. 1313, 1316
Railway Servants Compensation for Injury, 1446

Spirits in Bond Bill (*Mr. O'Sullivan, Major Nolan, Captain Pim, Mr. Richard Power, Mr. Yeaman, Major O'Beirne*)
c. Considered in Committee; Resolution agreed to, and reported; Bill ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 42]

STANHOPE, Hon. E. (Under Secretary of State for India), *Lincolnshire, Mid.*
Army—Newspaper Correspondents in the Field, 791, 1567, 1568
Army (India)—Kirwee Prize Money, 511

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India—Miscellaneous Questions
Despatch of 1869 — "The Empress of India," 146
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Indigo Cultivation in Behar, 1445
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Naga Hill Tribes, 681
Popular Representation, 598
Wynaad Gold Fields, 1568
India—Afghanistan—Miscellaneous Questions
Cabul, Executions at, 907
Expenses of the War, 469, 470
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Negotiations between Russia and the Ameer, 147
Proclamation of General Roberts, 683, 684
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STANLEY, Right Hon. Colonel F. A. (Secretary of State for War), *Lancashire, N.*
Africa, South—Zulu War—Despatches, 1106
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STANSFELD, Right Hon. J., *Halifax*
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STEVENSON, Mr. J. C., *South Shields*
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STEWART, Mr. M. J., *Wigton Bo.*
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Merchant Ships Laden in Bulk, Motion for a Select Committee, 1375

STRATHNAIRN, Lord
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Strensall Common Bill (*Lord Eustace Cecil, Colonel Stanley, Colonel Loyd Lindsay*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 9 [Bill 60]
Read 2° *Feb* 24, 1382

Sudeley, Lord
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Sugar Bounties—Negotiations with Foreign Powers
Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, Mr. Bourke *Feb* 20, 1104

Sullivan, Mr. A. M., *Louth Co.*
Ireland—"Home Rulers" Members of this House, 682
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Parliament—Miscellaneous Questions
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Parliament—Privilege—Interference of Peers in Elections—Hon. Major Jocelyn, Res. 1198, 1213
Railway Servants, Compensation for Injury, 1446
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 3, 740, 767; *cl.* 9, 1015, 1018
Seed Potatoes (Ireland), Consid. *cl.* 6, 881

SUPPLY
Resolved, "That this House will, To-morrow, resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty" *Feb* 12
The Navy Estimates, Question, Captain Pim; Answer, Mr. W. H. Smith *Feb* 20, 1105

SUPPLY
Considered in Committee *Feb* 23, 1248—Civil Service Supplementary Estimates, 1879-80—Class I.—Public Works and Buildings—Class II.—Salaries and Expenses of Public Departments
Resolutions reported *Feb* 24

Supreme Court of Judicature Acts—The Assizes
Question, Sir Henry James; Answer, Mr. Assheton Cross *Feb* 17, 809

Supreme Court of Judicature (District Courts) Bill (*Mr. Joseph Cowen, Mr. Ripley, Mr. Rowley Hill, Mr. Eustace Smith*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 25 [Bill 87]

Swanston, Mr. A., *Bandon*
Relief of Distress (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 3, 731, 984
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Synan, Mr. E. J., *Limerick Co.*
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 294, 333
Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1496, 1642, 1679, 1688, 1692, 1693, 1701
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Relief of Distress (Ireland), 2R. Amendt. 534, 556, 560; Comm. Amendt. 688; *cl.* 3, 926, 942, 952; *cl.* 4, 990, 992; *cl.* 5, 993; *cl.* 9, 999; Amendt. 1002, 1003, 1004, 1005, 1006, 1007; Consid. *add. cl.* 1227; *cl.* 4, 1234, 1235

Talbot, Mr. J. G. (Secretary to the Board of Trade), *Oxford University*
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Gaslight and Coke, Commercial Gas, and South Metropolitan Gaslight and Coke Companies, 2R. 789
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Taylor, Mr. D., *Coleraine*
Relief of Distress (Ireland), 2R. 550

Thurlow, Lord
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Tithe Commutation Bill
(*Mr. Goldney, Mr. Gregory*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Feb* 6 [Bill 38]

Tollemache, Hon. W., *Cheshire W.*
Inland Revenue—Customs Re-organization at Liverpool, 452

Torrens, Mr. W. T. M., *Finsbury*
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Torres Straits Islands, The
Question, Mr. A. M'Arthur; Answer, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach *Feb* 12, 508

Tracy, Hon. F. S. A. Hanbury-, *Montgomery*
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Treaty Guarantees
Observations, Questions, Sir William Harcourt; Answers, The Attorney General, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 13, 638

Treaty of Berlin
Article 23, Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, Mr. Bourke *Feb* 9, 265;—*European Turkey,* Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, Mr. Bourke *Feb* 12, 516;—*Article* 44—*Roumania,* Question, Mr. Serjeant Simon; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 23, 1186
Congress of Berlin—Protocol 18—*Ottoman Bondholders,* Question, Mr. Rylands; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 23, 1189

Tripartite Treaty of 1856, *The*
Observations, Question, Earl Granville; Reply, The Earl of Beaconsfield; short debate thereon *Feb* 17, 777

Turkey
Anglo-Turkish Convention (*Appointment of Officers*)—*Hafiz Pasha*, Questions, Mr. Dillwyn, Mr. Rylands; Answers, Mr. Bourke *Feb* 16, 680; Question, Mr. Rylands; Answer, Mr. Bourke *Feb* 29, 913;—*Keamil Pasha*, Question Mr. Pease; Answer, Mr. Bourke *Feb* 19, 927
Appointment of British Consuls and Vice Consuls, Question, Mr. Whitwell; Answer, Mr. Bourke *Feb* 9, 268
Capture of Colonel Synge by Brigands, Questions, Mr. H. Samuelson; Answers, Mr. Bourke *Feb* 23, 1198; *Feb* 24, 1299
Correspondence as to Ahmed Tewfik and Dr. Koella, Question, Mr. E. Jenkins; Answer, Mr. Bourke *Feb* 9, 269
Murder of Mr. Ogle, Questions, Mr. H. Samuelson; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 10, 381; *Feb* 20, 1104; *Feb* 23, 1197; Question, Mr. E. Jenkins; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 27, 1571
Provincial Constitutions of European Turkey, Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, Mr. Bourke *Feb* 20, 1100
The Slave Trade Treaty, Questions, Mr. Anderson, Mr. W. E. Forster; Answers, Mr. Bourke *Feb* 9, 266

Turnpike Acts Continuance Act, 1879
Select Committee appointed, "to inquire into the Fifth Schedule of 'The Annual Turnpike Acts Continuance Act, 1879;'" List of the Committee *Feb* 20, 1163

Ulster Tenant Right Bill
(*Mr. Macartney, Mr. Charles Lewis*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 8]

Vaccination Bill (*Dr. Cameron, Earl Percy, Mr. Lyon Playfair, Dr. Lush, Dr. Ward*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 9]

Volunteer Corps (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. O'Clery, Lord Francis Conyngham, Major Nolan, Major O'Beirne, Colonel King-Harman, Colonel Colthurst, Major O'Gorman, Colonel The O'Gorman Mahon*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 25]

WADDY, Mr. S. D., *Barnstaple*
Borough Franchise (Ireland), Res. 846
Channel Islands — Jersey — Payment of the Judge, 1572
Parliament—Privilege—Mr. Plimsoll, 1149, 1150

WAIT, Mr. W. K., *Gloucester*
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WARD, Dr. M. F., *Galway*
Parliament—Queen's Speech, Address in Answer to, 128, 182

War Office Regulation Act, 1878
Question, Sir Charles W. Dilke; Answer, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson *Feb* 20, 1099

Washington, Treaty of — Canadian and Newfoundland Fisheries
Question, Mr. Gourley; Answer, Mr. Bourke *Feb* 12, 512

Waste Lands (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. John George MacCarthy, Mr. Shaw, Sir Eardley Wilmot*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *Feb* 6 [Bill 24]

Water Supply (*Metropolis*)—*Legislation*
Question, Mr. Fawcett; Answer, Mr. Sclater-Booth *Feb* 12, 519; Questions, Mr. Fawcett; Answers, Mr. Assheton Cross *Feb* 23, 1184

Water Supply (*England and Wales*)
Question, Mr. Monk; Answer, Mr. Sclater-Booth *Feb* 23, 1185

WATKIN, Sir E. W., *Hythe*
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Resolved, That this House will, To-morrow, resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty *Feb* 12

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Army—Leeds Cavalry Barracks, 810
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WHITBREAD, Mr. S., *Bedford*
Parliament—Privilege—Mr. Plimsoll, 1129
Parliament—Business of the House (Order in Debate), Res. 1688

Whitwell, Mr. J., *Kendal*
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Williams, Mr. B. T., *Carmarthen*
County Courts, 2R. 1394

Wilmot, Sir J. E., *Warwickshire, S.*
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Wine Duties, Select Committee on—The Report
Question, Mr. C. M. Palmer; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer *Feb* 26, 1440

Wolff, Sir H. D., *Christchurch*
India—Despatch of 1869—"The Empress of India," 146
Parliament—Privilege—Mr. Plimsoll, 1119, 1150, 1151

Workmen's Compensation Bill [H.L.]
(*The Earl De La Warr*)
l. Presented ; read 1^a, after short debate *Feb* 10, 376 (No. 5)
2R. discharged * *Feb* 12

Yarmouth, Earl of (Comptroller of the Household)
Parliament—Queen's Speech—Her Majesty's Answer to Address, 886

Yorke, Mr. J. R., *Gloucestershire, N.*
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END OF VOLUME CCL., AND FIRST VOLUME OF SESSION 1880.

LONDON : CORNELIUS BUCK, 22, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

STOAKLEY, CAMBRIDGE